



MSC IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Dynamic Capabilities/Resource-Based View Dissertation Seminar

The Development of Organizational Capabilities **Jason Associates' Case Study**

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of MSc in
Business Administration at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa

June 2011

Abstract

Title: The Development of Organizational Capabilities- Jason Associates' Case Study

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Comprehending the foundations of firms' competitive advantage is a theme that has received general attention as a main area of study in the field of strategic management. Along with old and new suggestions in this topic, two concepts that have been receiving increasing consideration of the researches are the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities (DC). RBV has highlighted that by organizing critical resources companies can gain competitive advantage. This theory has an essential focus in the internal context of the firm. Contrarily, Dynamic Capabilities introduced the external dimension to the company: the environment where it operates. Dynamic Capabilities can be described as a company's capacity to build, integrate and reconfigure both internal and external competences to efficiently manage the alterations in the environment.

The research problem involved in this dissertation lies in analyzing how Jason Associates, a HR Consulting Company operating in a moderately dynamic environment, had created the capabilities that allowed it to achieve a competitive advantage. To answer the research question the case study method was adopted. After identifying a total of two capabilities we tested to what extent each capability passes the VRIO criteria (Barney, 1997) and then intending to analyze the company in an external dimension the four dimensions of DCs suggested by Barreto (2010) were applied to the case.

This study helps to better understand the relationship between a firm's resources and its competitive advantage. Furthermore, this case study also analysis the company in its external conditions, namely to identify how the firm is propense to sense opportunities and seize threats in the market.

Keywords: Competitive advantage, Resource Based View, Dynamic Capabilities

Resumo

Título: O Desenvolvimento de Capacidades Organizacionais – O Caso da Jason Associates

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Compreender as bases da criação da vantagem competitiva das empresas é um tema que tem recebido especial atenção como área de estudo no campo da gestão estratégica. De acordo com antigas e novas sugestões dentro deste tópico, dois conceitos que têm vindo a receber uma atenção crescente por parte dos pesquisadores são a Teoria Baseada nos Recursos (TBR) e as Capacidades Dinâmicas (CD). A TBR realça que através da organização de recursos críticos as empresas podem ganhar vantagem competitiva. Esta teoria tem essencialmente um enfoque no contexto interno da empresa. Contrariamente, as Capacidades Dinâmicas introduzem a dimensão externa da empresa: o ambiente onde ela opera. Capacidades Dinâmicas podem ser descritas como a habilidade de uma empresa para integrar, construir e reconfigurar competências internas e externas de modo lidar rapidamente com mudanças no ambiente.

O problema de investigação desta dissertação procura analisar como a Jason Associates, uma empresa de consultoria de Recursos Humanos que opera num ambiente moderadamente dinâmico, criou as capacidades que a levaram a atingir uma vantagem competitiva. Para responder a esta pergunta utiliza-se a metodologia de um estudo de caso. Após serem identificadas um total de duas capacidades, testa-se em que medida é que cada uma delas obedece aos critérios VRIO (Barney, 1997). Posteriormente, pretendendo analisar a empresa no seu contexto externo, aplicamos a este estudo de caso as quatro dimensões sugeridas por Barreto (2010) na sua definição de Capacidades Dinâmicas.

Este estudo ajuda a uma melhor compreensão relativamente à relação entre os recursos de uma empresa e a sua vantagem competitiva. Ainda, neste estudo de caso também se analisa a empresa nas suas condições externas, nomeadamente para identificar como é que a empresa é propensa a identificar oportunidades e ameaças no mercado.

Palavras-chave: Vantagem Competitiva, Teoria Baseada nos Recursos, Capacidades Dinâmicas.

Acknowledgements

I want to state my gratitude to my advisor, Prof. Nuno Cardeal, for all his support and guidance during these months, motivating me to keep working on it and concluding it.

I also want to strongly thank the four interviewed of this study: Mr. Pedro Brito, Ms. Tânia Santos, Ms. Raquel Lemos and Mrs. Ana Silva who kindly received me in the Jason Associates' office to answer my questions and talk about this project. They were all very accessible and welcomed me with great friendliness and positive thinking.

My acknowledgments also go to all my professors who during my academic formation taught me important concepts and enriched my knowledge and skills.

Last but not least, I thank my family and friends for their support, especially Francisco Moura, who has been an inspiration to always fight hard for my goals.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review.....	2
2.1 How firms develop sustained competitive advantage?.....	2
1.1.1 BCG Matrix	3
1.1.2 Porter's Five Forces.....	4
1.1.3 Strategic Conflict.....	4
1.1.4 Conclusion	5
1.2 Resource-Based View	5
1.3 Dynamic Capabilities	7
1.4. Resource-based view/Dynamic Capabilities and Firms' Superior Level of Performance....	10
3. Methodology.....	12
3.1 Choosing the Company of Study	12
3.2 Primary and Secondary Data Sources	13
3.3 The Process for Case Analysis.....	16
4. Data Analysis.....	16
4.1 Human Resources & Executive Search Consulting Services Industry	16
4.2 Brief Description of Jason Associates	17
4.1.2.1 Organizational Capabilities at Jason Associates	21
4.1.2.2 The development of Capabilities at Jason Associates	25
5. Discussion	29
5.1 VRI Analysis of Jason Associates' Resources and Capabilities	31
5.1.1 VRI Analysis of Jason Associates' Resources	31
6. Conclusions	42
References	44
Appendixes	48

Figures, Tables and Graphs

Figure 2.1: Data Sources	15
Figure 4.1: Global HR Consulting Market Size and Growth	15
Table 4.1: Jason Associates' Portfolio of Services	19
Graph 4.1: Jason Associates' sales volume	19
Graph 4.2: Jason Associates' Portfolio of clients	20
Graph 4.3: Jason Associates' Collaborators	20
Table 4.1: Summary of relevant decisions for the current position of Jason Associates	28
Table 5.1: Inputs for the Capabilities	30
Table 5.2: VRI Analysis of Resources/Capabilities	41
Table 5.3: Organizational Culture at Jason Associates- Evidences of Inimitability	42
Table 5.4: Human Capital at Jason Associates- Evidences of Inimitability	43
Table 5.5: Creative Process at Jason Associates- Evidences of Inimitability	43
Figure 5.1: Logic Model of the Process of Creating Capabilities at Jason Associates	44
Figure 5.1: The Four Dimensions of Firms' Dynamic Capabilities (Barreto, 2010)	45

Table of Appendixes

Appendix I: Jason Associates- Sales Evolution (2004-2011).....	55
Appendix II: Jason Associates - Clients Evolution (2004 – 2011)	55
Appendix III: Jason Associates – Human Resources (2004-2011).....	55
Appendix IV: The Star Tracker- web social network overview	56
Appendix V: TheTalent City- Website Overview	56
Appendix VI: Jason Associates – Corporate Happiness Formula	57
Appendix VII: Jason Associates- Company's Newsletter.....	57
Appendix VIII: Clients' Testimonials.....	58
Appendix IX – Interviews	60
Appendix X – Press Releases	68

1. Introduction

The present dissertation intends to analyze Jason Associates, a Portuguese company that has been increasingly recognized for its innovative approach toward Human Resources Consulting solutions for its clients, under the research question: *“How the firm has developed the capabilities that are in the origin of its competitive advantage?”*

For that purpose this study was divided into six chapters. Following this brief introduction it is the Literature Review chapter where sustained theoretical support was gathered in order to offer an understanding of the body of research that has been developed under the topic of firm’s competitive advantage in general and the contribution of the Resource-Based-View and Dynamic Capabilities concepts in particular. The third chapter concerns the justification and description of the Methodology used to develop the analysis of the company under the proposed research question. Along with the suggestion of Yin (2009) the case study was adopted because the research questions focusing mainly on *“How?”* and *“Why?”* are more likely to conduct an explanatory study and to induce the use of case study as the preferable research method. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the Data Analysis. Here, following a brief description of the company’s history and its strategic movements, there is an analysis of Jason Associates’ capabilities and the way they were developed through the years. The fifth chapter of the dissertation is the Discussion. After identifying the firm’s resources underpinning its capabilities, a VRI analysis was conducted following the suggestions of Barney (1997). Furthermore, in this chapter there is an analysis of the capabilities according to the four proposed dimensions of dynamic capabilities in Barreto’s (2010) definition. Finally, in chapter six conclusions and limitations are drawn and future possible areas of research are given.

2. Literature Review

Aiming to understand how firms develop and sustain competitive advantages, this chapter of the dissertation runs through a synopsis of some existing flow of research on this topic. The logic behind it is to begin with a broader perspective, providing an orchestration of some more generalist concepts in the strategy field such as the BCG model, the Porter's Five Forces and Strategic Conflict approach, which will serve as a basis to further concentrate in the Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities models as these are the frameworks around each the entire thesis will be constructed.

2.1 How firms develop sustained competitive advantage?

In recent years various notions of the competitive advantage concept have been thriving, but an exactly accurate definition is indefinable. In Jay Barney's work (1991) the author distinguishes the definition for competitive advantage and sustained competitive advantage of a firm. Indeed, according to his article a firm is said to have a competitive advantage when *"it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors"* and to have sustained competitive advantage *"when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy"* (p.102). One way or another, in short the competitive advantage is a term that generally pretends to answer to the question on how does a firm is able to create value and to attain rents that are above the average. However, other alternative definitions have been suggested and in this context, some authors have been adding the notion of economic value to the definition of competitive advantage. According to Besanko, Dranove and Shanley (2000) when an enterprise gets a *"higher rate of economic profit than the average rate of economic profit of other firms competing within the same market this firm has a competitive advantage in that market."* (p.389). Also, Peteraff and Barney (2003) propose a definition for competitive advantage concerning a firm's potential to outperform *"its rivals in terms of rents,*

profitability, market share and other outcomes of interest” (p.313). In this dissertation it was adopted the Peteraff and Barney’s definition of competitive advantage as a firm’s ability to *“create more economic value than the marginal competitor in its product market.”*(2003,p.314) being that to create economic value for its customers a firm must produce superior net benefits than its competitors, through a greater differentiation and/or through achieving lower economic costs.

2.1.1 BCG Matrix

Developed by Bruce Henderson (1970), the BCG model was the first approach attempting to find justifications underlying a firm’s capability to achieve competitive advantage. The BCG model is essentially a portfolio matrix that separately addresses the strategic routes to be followed by different business units, taking into account the different levels of potential growth and profitability (Arnoldo and Nicholas 1983). This matrix is divided into four quadrants concerning the potential growth of the market and the actual market share of a certain product (Arnoldo and Nicholas 1983) and suggests four types of business units(or products): Stars(High market share, High Market Growth), Cash Cows(High Market Share, Low Market Growth) ,Question Marks(Low Market Share, High Market Growth) and Dogs(Low Market Share, Low Market Growth).

The logic behind the BCG Matrix is that any diversified company should have a mix of Cash Cows and Stars products. Cash Cows are the responsible products to finance the development of Question Marks, since they have large market shares in slow growing markets and require little investment by the company. Consequently, Question Marks succeeding as market leaders should be selected to keep being financed as to gain market share and become Stars. The other way around, if they are found not capable to become Stars, they should be neglected by the company as they represent a waste of resources to become Dogs.

2.1.2 Porter's Five Forces

The dominant model in strategy during 1980s was the competitive forces approach developed by Porter (1980). This approach, based in the “structure-conduct-performance” paradigm of industrial organization (Bain, 1959), underline the movements a firm can incur in to create superior positions against competitive forces.

Michael Porter defines in this model five industry-level competitive forces that generally outline a competitive environment -Threat of Entry; Threat of Substitutes; Bargaining Power of Buyers; Bargaining Power of suppliers and the Competitive Rivalry among Existing Firms. Through a systematic way of thinking about these competitive forces a firm can find a position in an industry where it is best defeated against these forces or influence them in its favor. Furthermore, firms will earn rents when they are “*somehow able to impede the competitive forces, which tend to drive economic returns to zero*” (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p.511).

The five-forces framework also assumes that competitive strategies are frequently intended at shifting the firm's position in the industry “*vis-à-vis competitors and suppliers*” (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997, p.511). This way, a firm can influence its competitive environment through the power it has to manage its position.

2.1.3 Strategic Conflict

Developed by Shapiro (1989) this approach makes use of game theory tools to analyze the nature of competitive interaction between rival firms. A key idea is that firm investments in physical capital (such as capacity), intangible assets (such as R&D) and advertising, among others, can influence the behavior and actions of competitor firms and therefore manipulate the market environment. A firm can gain an advantage by “*investing if its own more vigorous behavior in the future will lead its rivals to respond by competing less vigorously or by staying out of the market altogether*”(Shapiro,1989,p.127). Meanwhile, these investments will play a strategic role if they are visible to other rival firms and if they are unrecoverable, constituting sunk costs.

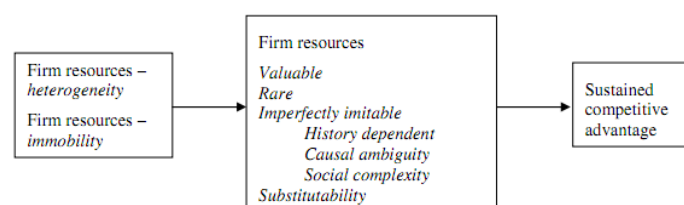
2.1.4 Conclusion

The paradigms discussed above may be complementary or competitive and they are powerful contributions to understand the relationship between firm behavior and performance outcomes. Nevertheless, even if they provide different lens on the topic of sustainable competitive positioning, their main focus points to a firm's external level of analysis. Over against this focus on the external environment of the firm, the Resource-Based View framework, as well as, the Dynamic Capabilities approach focus on the internal organization of the firms trying to understand what might be the origin of the competitive advantage developed by the firm. This way, it seems important to study these theories, which can provide a strategic advantage for a company.

2.2 Resource-Based View

Endeavoring to analyze the conditions underlying firms' ability to achieve, change and sustain competitive advantage according to their resources and capabilities, the Resource-based view (RBV) framework is considered a complementary theory (Peteraf and Barney, 2003) inserted in the field of strategic management and focuses on the internal organization of the firms. It is based on the assumption that organizations differ according to the heterogeneity of their resources. These resources can sustain a firm's competitive advantage as long as they are, simultaneously valuable, rare and imperfectly imitable or substitutable (Barney, 1991, 1995). In this sense they must permit the firm to take on a value creating strategy, by either "*outperforming its competitors or reduce its own weaknesses*" (Barney, 1991, p.106).

Figure 2.1: The RBV framework (Barney, 1991)



Barney (1991) mentioning to Daft (1983) argues that resources "*include all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc; controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness*" (Barney, 1991, p. 101). The distinction between capabilities and resources is highlighted by Makadok (2001). The author defines capabilities as "*a special type of resource, specifically an organizationally embedded non-transferable firm-specific resource whose purpose is to improve the productivity of the other resources possessed by the firm*" (Makadok, 2001, p. 389).

Another defining aspect of Resource-based theory (RBT) is that it explains in a "*resource-level*" and an "*enterprise-level*" the differences of sustained competitive advantage among firms. It looks inside the firm and down to the market factor conditions that the enterprise must deal with and "*focuses on the resources and capabilities controlled by an enterprise that underlie persistent performance differentials among firms*" (Peteraf and Barney, 2003, p. 312).

According to Barney et al. (2001), RBV encompasses five fields of study. First, in what concerns to *human resources management* (HRM), increasing importance has been given to people as a strategic resource to attain firms' success. A firm HRM practices may be replicated by other firms, however HRM routines and systems may be firm specific and unique, contributing to achieve superior competitive advantage. Second, the use of RBV in *economics and finance* concerns the new findings on corporate finance and agency theory which can be crucial in understanding the differential level of performance and resource usage among firms. Third, regarding *Entrepreneurship*, Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) propose that heterogeneous outputs are the result of a transformation of the inputs through the "*entrepreneurial process of cognition, discovery, understanding market opportunities and coordinated knowledge*". The emergence of entrepreneurial opportunities comes from an individual's unique insight into the value of resources. Furthermore, when entrepreneurs expand their knowledge and absorb capacity through experience and learning, they become a source of superior competitive advantage. Fourth, the contribution of *marketing* to the RBV is essentially

related to the customer's value and market-based assets. It is important to understand how specific attributes, benefits, attitudes forming the customer's value is "intended, generated and sustained" and also to identify how changes this value if affected by market-based assets changes (Srivastava, Fahey and Christensen, 2001). These authors also suggest that the creation of superior competitive advantage through marketing comes from how it can clarify the nature of resources, for instance through helping to "*understand the need for rare resources to be seen in terms of customer needs*" (p.629). Finally, in terms of *International Business*, the RBV has helped to specify the nature of resources required to overcome the responsibility of foreignness and provided a link to investigate the firms' possession of resource advantage that enables successful internationalization. (Barney, Wright, Ketchen, 2001). In this sense, international experience by top managers, as well as network ties, foreign alliances and Mergers & Acquisitions can represent a firm-specific tacit knowledge that is difficult to imitate and therefore can lead to superior advantage.

Despite its importance to explain the source of competitive advantage of a firm, one of the resource-based view boundaries is that it does not explains how and why certain firms have competitive advantage in situations of rapid and unpredictable change. The nature of RBV is fundamentally stationary, as "*it operates under a set of ceteris paribus assumptions*" (Peteraf and Barney, 2003, p.313), and insufficient to explain firm's superior performance in dynamic environments (Barreto, 2010). In markets where the competitive panorama is not static, the dynamic capabilities turn out to be the source of sustained competitive advantage (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000).

1.3 Dynamic Capabilities

As previously referred, the dynamic capabilities perspective is argued by various authors to be an extension of the Resource-Based view of the firm. According to Ambrosini and Bownman (2009) the first contribution developing explicitly the view of dynamic capabilities refers to the Teece (1990) working paper where the authors state that "*our view of the firm is somewhat richer than the standard resource-based view*

(...) it is not only the bundle of resources that matter, but the mechanisms by which firms learn and accumulate new skills and capabilities, and the forces that limit the rate and direction of this process” (1990, p.11). Afterwards, Teece and Pisano call attention to the role of the changing nature of the external environment and its influence in the firm’s organizational skills to adapt, integrate and reconfigure internal and external organizational skills, resources and functional competences toward them (Teece and Pisano, 1994). The 1990 and 1994 work was then elaborated upon in the 1997 Teece *et al.*’s publication (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009) which would be the catalyzer of a growing flow of research (Barreto, 2010) on this concept. In this seminal article it is stated that dynamic capabilities are typically “built rather than bought” and define them as *“the firm’s ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments”* (Teece *et al.*, 1997, p.516). Even though following alternative definitions of dynamic capabilities developed by other authors are adaptations of this original definition (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009), there is not yet a concrete theorization of the concept which is considered abstract (Daneels, 2008) and tautological (Williamson, 1999). In this sense, embodying current and past suggested propositions within the field of dynamic capabilities, Barreto’s work aims to establish a connection between this diversity and somewhat disengaged rapid flow of research on this topic pointing in incongruent directions. According to this author the several alternative conceptualizations of dynamic capabilities *“vary significantly in terms of the nature, specific role, relevant context, heterogeneity assumptions, and purposes of dynamic capabilities.”* (Barreto, 2010, p.259)

In what concerns to their nature, dynamic capabilities have been defined as abilities/capacities, processes, routines or a combination of these and their specific role is related to changes in key internal resources, capabilities, operating routines. In terms of relevant context some researches consider the importance of dynamic capabilities only in highly dynamic environments, while others assign the concept to moderate or even to stable dynamic environments. There are also authors like Eisenhard and Martin (2000) who had extended the concept to more than one relevant context and those who had simply ignored its characteristics. Regarding the heterogeneity, even though some

authors argue that dynamic capabilities show commonalities among firms, most of the developed work accept that dynamic capabilities are essentially firm “specific and unique”.

Barreto (2010) considers all these differences to offer the most recent and complete conceptualization of this topic, thus referring to dynamic capabilities as *the “firm’s potential to systematically solve problems, formed by its propensity to sense opportunities and threats, to make timely and market-oriented decisions, and to change its resource base”* (Barreto, 2010, p.271). His definition is hence a multidimensional conceptualization of the notion of dynamic capabilities referring to four separate but related dimensions, this is:

- Propensity to sense opportunities and threats;
- Propensity to make timely decisions;
- Propensity to make market oriented-decisions;
- Propensity to change the resource base.

First, the *propensity to sense opportunities and threats* is lined up with the argument that dynamic capabilities appertains to the capacity to do a constant environmental scanning through searching and exploring across fast-paced changes in consumer needs, technological opportunities and competitors activity (Teece, 2007). It is also consistent with Schreyögg and Kliesch-Eberl’s suggestion (2007) of “*capability monitoring*” as the reflexive monitoring of the capabilities in order to check their ongoing workability in the light of a potentially changing unpredictable environment. Second, another crucial dimension is *the propensity to make timely decisions*. It is consistent with what Lieberman and Montgomery suggest as “first mover advantages” (1988). Sometimes, when a firm is one step ahead of its competitors in what concerns implementing a strategy, it can gain a sustained competitive advantage over other firms. This firm may obtain “*access to distribution channels, develop goodwill with customers, or develop a positive reputation, all before firms implement their strategies later. Thus, “first-moving firms may obtain a sustained competitive advantage.”* (Barney, 1991, p.104)

Third, the *propensity to make market-oriented decisions* concerns the extent to which organizations are effective and efficient to provide superior value for customers, both through the “timing” and the “content” of their managerial decisions (Adner and Helfat, 2003). Finally, *Propensity to change the resource base* highlights the firm’s predisposition to incur resource based changes. Rosenbloom (2000) argues that it is of primary importance for organizations to have “resource changing propensity” as long as they also have “decision-making propensity”. This way, the true value of firm capabilities lies in the action of leaders to allow renovating changes through creating, extending or reconfiguring the resource base (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

1.4. Resource-based view/Dynamic Capabilities and Firms’ Superior Level of Performance

The question on why some firms, despite the relatively superior resources they possess, are not able to sustain their competitive advantage over time (specially in dynamic markets) might be answered in light of the RBV and DC theories described above: some firms are more able to reconfigure their VRIN resources into dynamic capabilities, especially in turbulent markets.

Along with old and new suggestions established in this field, researchers seem divided as to whether state a direct or indirect relationship between a firm’s dynamic capabilities and its superior performance or competitive advantage. As argued by Teece et. al (1997), Makadok (2001) or Zollo and Winter (2002) dynamic capabilities are directly linked to a firm’s success and failure, creation of wealth, superiority and survival. Diverging from this opinion, other authors disregard the direct connection between dynamic capabilities and performance. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) argue that even though dynamic capabilities are a necessary condition to achieve competitive advantage, a firms’ performance level relies largely in the configuration of the new resources brought by the execution of their dynamic capabilities and the firm’s ability to manage these capabilities better and wiser than the competition. Furthermore, this approach highlights the importance of the new resources to be “*valuable, rare,*

inimitable and non-substitutable” (VRIN) (Barney, 1991) and assumes that superior performance is only likely to be achieved if the configurations of the new resources obey to these criteria.

According to Zott (2003), even if firms have similar dynamic capabilities they may end up having different performances as they may end up building different bundles of resources. These different bundles of resources will affect the way firms draw their different strategic paths such as new products positioning or diversification, which consequently may influence their performance. This author as others like Zahra et al. (2006) confers, this way, an indirect link between a firm’s dynamic capabilities and its competitive advantage.

This dissertation endeavors to answer how a firm has created the capabilities that are in the origin of its competitive advantage. Therefore, this study makes an important contribution to the clarification of "how" the resources are transformed into competitive advantage in light of the past research made on the Resource-based view and Dynamic Capabilities theories and their ability to explain a firms’ superior level of performance.

3. Methodology

Bearing in mind that the outsourcing of Human Resources (RH) is today a mature industry in Portugal due to the increasing confidence of the companies in the Human Capital recruitment process by other companies, the investigation in cause endeavors to analyze Jason Associates, a Portuguese Company operating in the field of HR Consulting under the research question:

“How the firm has developed the capabilities that are in the origin of its competitive advantage?”

Even though this will be the focus question of this analysis, it will be crucial to first understand not only how the resources/ capabilities were achieved but also what are those resources/ capabilities.

According to Yin (2009, p.9), the research questions focusing mainly on “*How?*” and “*Why?*” are more likely to conduct an explanatory study and to induce the use of case study as the preferable research method. This is for the reason that such questions deal with operational processes needing to be drawn for continuous periods of time, instead of minor isolated events or occurrences. Likewise, the case study method is favored to investigate complex contemporary phenomena when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. Hence, along with Yin’s definition, a case study is an “*empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.*”(Yin, 2009, p.18)

3.1 Choosing the Company of Study

There are two main reasons underlying the choice for Jason Associates, as the subject of study. First of all, the relevant context where the company is inserted is a highly dynamic environment, marked by instability of the labor market in Portugal, a high

employment turnover and increasing unemployment rates in the recent years. Secondly, in what concerns other Human Resources companies in Portugal, Jason Associates has been developing its activity in a total innovative way. The company created the StarTracker¹, an invitation-only niche web social-network that aims to connect and empower global Portuguese talent around the world (with over 33,000 members in over 250 cities of the world, in 136 countries) and most recently the TalentCity², a pioneer project that intends to give the information and the tools to young professionals searching for a job position. Hence, both the dynamic environment where Jason Associates operates and its acknowledge intension in approaching different strategies for its business, may had effectively required the company to acquire/develop different resources/capabilities.

3.2 Primary and Secondary Data Sources

The search for primary and secondary data for the present analysis took into account the fact that the case study method entails a personal observation of the occurrences being studied and interviews with the individuals inserted in the events (Yin, 2009, p.11). This way, it was possible to collect a diversity of data evidence - company documents, interviews, press releases and observations.

First and foremost, in order to get a panoramic understanding of Jason Associate's services and projects, a first round of research through the corporate website was held. This way, it was possible to get a first insight about the company's history, mission, vision and value proposition, crucial to get involved with the company's philosophy and to prepare what would be the first contact with the enterprise. It was also through internet searching that it was possible to get access to videos and both a total of eight employees and clients' testimonials on projects developed by Jason Associates.

Following this web-based research for secondary data about the company, there was a need to search for primary sources of information. For that purpose, a research for

¹ www.thestartracker.com

² www.thetalentcity.com

company's employees using the business-oriented social networking, LinkedIn, on the search topic "Jason Associates Portugal" was incurred. The results showed, among others, the web profile of Tânia Santos, HR Strategic Senior Consultant for six years, to whom it was sent an email explaining the main goal of the task for a possible personal interview.

A total of four interviews were conducted - one with the company's leaders and three with its collaborators (one unstructured and not-recorded and two semi-structured and recorded). They were all held at Jason Associate's office in Lisbon and occurred during March and April of 2011. The interviews had an average duration of 60 minutes and were transcript afterwards.

The first meeting was held at the Jason Associates' office in Lisbon on 16/03/11 with Tânia Santos, HR Strategic Senior Consultant for six years, and Raquel Lemos who is a HR Strategic Consultant, for a year and a half now. It lasted 60 minutes and it was not recorded as it served mainly as non-structured talking to get a clear frame of the enterprise's business reality and the field in which it is inserted. Also, through this first meeting, it was possible to draw an outline on how the present project would be developed, who and when should be interviewed and what archival documents would make sense to collect to carry an exploratory study of the firm.

Following this, the first structured interview occurred with one of the Jason Associates' senior consultants, Ana Silva, and lasted 50 minutes. Once that Ana Silva has been working for the company since its first years of activity, this interview was important to gather information on the company's path through time and to know how the company's presence in the Portuguese market has evolved until today.

Afterwards the second interview occurred with of the company's Managing Partners, Pedro Brito on 04/04/2011 and lasted 50 minutes. The main focus of this interview was to analyze the vision of the company's leader on the current competitive situation of Jason Associates. For that purpose, the interview was designed into four main sections endeavoring to obtain information on the most relevant events comprising the

company's history; past and current strategic steps; recruitment policies and sources of competitive advantage.

The third structured interview had place on 11/04/2011 with Raquel Lemos. Here, it was taken into account the information previously obtained with the Managing partner's interview, being that the main focus was mainly to cross the leader's vision with the collaborators' vision of the company and triangulate them . In this sense, the questions on these interviews were designed to analyze how the other members of the firm understood and felt about specific strategic steps and situations described previously by the company's leader.

Beside the face-to-face interviews, another valuable source of information to analyze the dynamic capabilities underlying Jason Associates' competitive advantages were the company's documents provided during the meetings.

These documents include the company's culture handbook ("YOUR HED, HUMAN EXPERIENCE DESIGN"); the company's magazine ("YOU Magazine"); managerial reports; press releases; company's presentations and accounting reports, between others. These elements were a precious source of primary data allowing to triangulate the information obtained with the interviews and to control biased information.

Figure 2.1: Data Sources

Source	Number	Example
Interviews	4	Managing Partner; Strategic Senior Consultant; Strategic Consultant
Press Articles	5	Press releases
Archival Documents	5	Clients Testimonials; Sales Data; Employees Data; Portfolio of Clients Evolution
Direct Observations	4	Visits to the company's office

3.3 The Process for Case Analysis

Once identified the most important strategic steps of Jason Associates, through the data collected on the interviews, a first coding of the contents was incurred. This data coding allowed us to compose both the data analysis and the discussion section of the dissertation, which refer to the development of Jason Associates' organizational capabilities. Afterwards, a second data coding was performed in order to apply the VRIO model - Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Organization - developed by Jay Barney (1997) to the identified capabilities/recourses of the company and this way confirm their potential to constitute a source of competitive advantage.

In a later stage, aiming to introduce an external dimension in the analysis of the company's organizational capabilities, the four dimensions proposed in Barreto's definition of Dynamic Capabilities (2010) definition were applied.

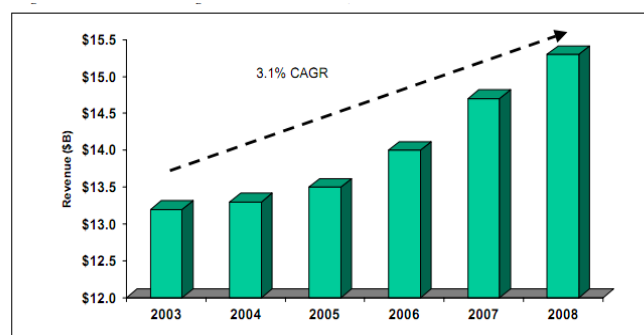
4. Data Analysis

4.1 Human Resources Consulting Industry

4.1.1 Brief Market Trends

Jumping back from a turn down in prior years, the global HR consulting industry saw in 2005 a growth of 6.1% and maintained a stable growth rate of 9.1% in 2006, resulting in an \$18.4 billion market, according to a study conducted by Kennedy Information.

Figure 4.1: Global HR Consulting Market Size and Growth



Source: Kennedy Information -The HR Consulting and Outsourcing Markets Report

Recently, the global economic depression has been forcing companies to reconsider business plans and strategies, whereat cost reduction has came out as a key driving force for HR outsourcing market in the short run. As declared by the market research report developed by *Global Industry Analysts, Inc*, the United States and Europe leaded in 2010 the global Human Resources Outsourcing market.

Also, according to a BCG report³, the retention, attraction and identification of talent keeps being the most important future HR topic. Furthermore, in response to the financial crisis and worldwide recession many companies resort to cost-cutting measures and layoffs which dampened the employee engagement. Companies will be trying to re-establish a sense of pride and trust.

4.2 Brief Description of Jason Associates

When Tiago Forjaz, Pedro Brito and Patrícia Lopes created Jason Associates in November 2004 they had a clear vision for introducing a new concept and approach to the talent industry in Portugal- the pursuit of happiness in people's work life. Inspired by their previous work experience in other Human Resources Consulting companies, the three entrepreneurs soon realized that the extreme importance given to the specific knowledge and experience required in a candidate applying for a job position could no longer sustain, by itself, the long term engagement of an individual with an organization objectives, mission and values. Instead, the true value of employee recruitment for both the candidate and the organization should come from the fit between a talent and the role "he or she has to play in the context of an organization and its culture, while pursuing a meaningful purpose in life". This belief is truly evidenced in the following leader's quote:

"Taking into consideration the experience that we had, there was a paradigm, which we believed to make no sense. In what concerned the companies recruitment policies, both for recruiting companies and its clients, which were made initially with a focus on the professional experience, this is, when they were looking for a financial director, or when they were looking for an electro-technical engineer, whoever, they

³ BCG /WFPMA Report: Creating People Advantage 2010

were looking for someone who had previously experience in that function and that goes against the human nature, why? Because we have inter-personal aptitudes, interests, necessities, fears ...and not always what we do is necessarily what we want the most to do.”

The company's name was inspired by the legend of a mythological Greek hero, Jason, who brought together a team of outstanding characters to go on board the Argos on a mission to discover the Golden Fleece (said to have the supremacy to bring wellbeing to all mankind) embodies the values and goals of Jason and is a perfect symbol of Jason's identity.

Jason Associates is born this way as a company which provides its clients with an Expert Talent Advisory service that aims to discover each individual's true talent and preferences in order to intermediate talent based, not only on their relevant experience but also on their true talent and potential.

“The way we've imagined Jason, was a mix between a consulting company in the Human Resources area with “A Vida é Bela” concept (...) By the time we started the company it was quite difficult to imagine how it was going to work. It evolved naturally to other business areas with a more established procedure. In the beginning we only provided services in Execute Search, our focus was 100% recruitment and talent attraction.”

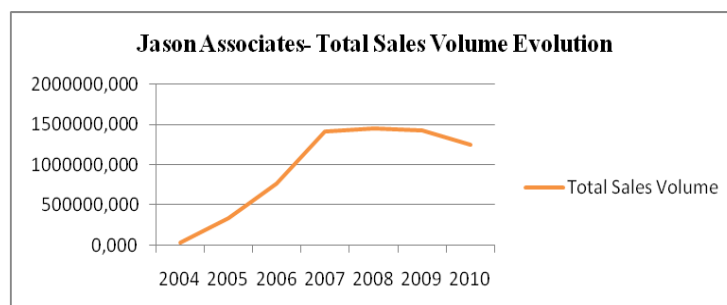
Currently with two offices, one in Lisbon and one in Oporto, the company's activity evolved through its seven years of existence, from offering services on Executive Search to provide its clients with projects on Human Resources Consultancy. Today, these are the two main business areas of Jason Associates and the services provided are represented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Jason Associates' Portfolio of Services

Jason Associates Services	Project Tipology
TALENT ACQUISITION Search and recruitment of Top and Middle Management positions, and high potential Young Talents TALENT BOOSTING Incite behavioral changes that create real impact on business enterprises. TALENT STRATEGIC SERVICES Designing solutions to the companies' leadership and management needs. TALENT EFFECTIVENESS TOOLS Designing and implementing technological solutions to support management and human resources development initiatives	Executive Search Team Engagement Customer Engagement Talent Assessment Talent Acquisition Strategies Talent Management Strategies Leadership Values and Corporate Culture Corporate talks Talent Boosting Management Team Effectiveness

Source: Jason Associates 'website

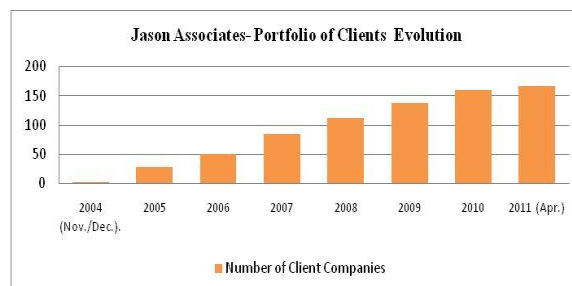
The total sales volume of Jason Associates was in 2010 approximately 1, 3 Million Euros. The company reported a fast increase in sales during its first years of activity (2004- 2007) with an average sales growth of 48% in this period. From 2008 as the number of clients and all the business activity becomes more stable, the average growth sales calms down. During 2008 and 2009 the company suffered a small decrease in sales due to the effects of the economic downturn felt during this period. Today, the revenues of Jason Associates come majorly from projects in Consultancy, 70%, and the Executive Search represents around 30% of the business activity.

Graph 4.1: Jason Associates' Sales volume

Source: Internal documents of the company

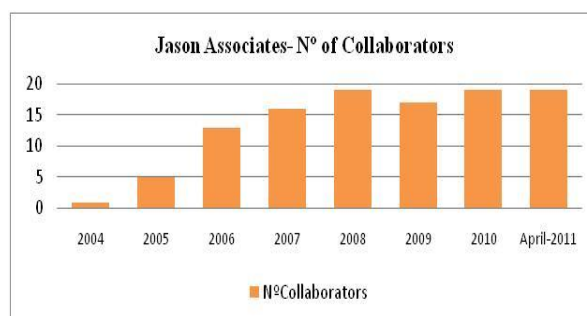
Jason Associates' portfolio of clients has been exponentially growing as the company becomes more established in the Portuguese market. In the period 2004-2011 the total number of clients reported an average growth of 38%, being that the highest growth occurred in the first years of existence of the company. Today Jason Associates provides its services to a total of 167 companies, a number that is quite distant from the 25 client companies when it began its activity. This is a reflection of the increasing success and notoriety of Jason Associates in the Expert Talent Advisory and Consulting industry. Prestigious companies like Pfizer, Unicer, Merck, Cisco, Fujitsu, Barclays, Oni Communications, Roche Chemical Pharmaceutical and Banco Primus are only few examples of clients that have been establishing a long term partnership and a trustful relationship with Jason Associates. In what concerns the company's staff, the number of collaborators has been increasing in the same pace as the company's activity grows in the market. Jason Associates counts currently with 19 collaborators.

Graph 4.2: Jason Associates' Portfolio of clients



Source: Internal documents of the company

Graph 4.3: Jason Associates' Collaborators



Source: Internal documents of the company

4.1.2.1 Organizational Capabilities of Jason Associates

From the moment Jason Associate was founded in 2004, the first strategic step taken to differentiate the company from its competitors refers to the entrepreneurs' will of fitting talented people to their portfolio of clients. For that purpose, the company created an interviewing methodology that was designed to assess an individual's inherent abilities instead of just scan his experience:

“What we've tried to do in an initial phase was creating a methodology and explain to clients that we are not going to ignore the previous job experience, it is necessary, but we are going to look to another dimension that is related to the potential of the candidate...and this potential has to do with his talents, his preferences, necessities, wishes... that is what must truly fit the organization.”

As years passed, the companies in the Portuguese market started acknowledging the value brought by Jason Associates in its effective approach to find the best talent fit instead of the “*most qualified, less risky, or most intelligent candidates*”. The firm achieves high levels of satisfaction from its clients on this Expert Talent Advisory service and already in 2004 the company develops the first consultancy project for a Bank establishment. From this moment on, Jason Associates decides to enlarge its business portfolio and starts providing companies with customized projects not only in talent attraction but also in talent development, talent retention and organizational transformation, becoming a truly successful HR consulting firm.

In May 2006 at the Ritz Hotel in Lisbon, Tiago Forjaz moderated a speaking session with Jack Welch, the former Chairman and CEO of General Electric. Tiago Forjaz told Welch about his idea of creating the first Global Portuguese Talent network. After encouraging it, Jack wrote to Tiago: “Dear Tiago, thank you for moderating my session in Portugal, you and Antonio were terrific, as far as for your idea (...) the objective is great and I wish you good luck with making it happen, best Jack Welch”⁴. A group of Jason Associates staff made a travel for over 5 months to Madrid, London Paris, São Paulo, New York, in order to hold gathering and energize the “Portuguese Diaspora's

⁴ In www.JasonAssociates.com

talented youth”. The aim was to strengthen the ties between people that shared a common affinity - their Portuguese nationality. This way, in 2008 company launches the first Global Network of Portuguese talent –The Star Tracker- which is considered by the company as the major initiative developed for the talent community until today. The success of the platform had a direct impact in the company’s notoriety. The social network won the prize “Open Web Awards 2008” organized by the North-American Maschable.com in the category of Niche Social Network.

As time went by, and due to the success of The Star Tracker, Jason Associates became more visible in the Portuguese market. In 2009, the company develops the Corporate Happiness Formula© (used by more than 1000 professionals in 2009) - an online questionnaire that was designed to support people in understanding the importance of the variables the company believed to be essential to enjoy a professional career. It is used to understand the talents’ preferences and assist them in designing a “choice matrix” that they can utilize to assess alternative scenarios and options for their careers.

Afterwards in 2010, the effects of the economic world crisis that begun in 2007 came to exercise a strong influence on the strategies and organization of firms in Portugal. In such scenario companies in the Portuguese market were tired to confront the consequences of the economic crisis incurring in “cost-cutting” strategies to survive and Jason Associates’ consultants see an opportunity to reinforce its ability to provide non-traditional alternative solutions that endeavor to enhance the company’s performance through “corporate engagement” projects. In this sense, the company successfully undertook a repositioning of its services, marketizing in an innovative way de concepts of Corporate Engagement, University Market, Human Marketing, Human Experience Design, Corporate Channels and Social Networks for companies. It is in this context that in the same year, and in partnership with Mutchbeta, Jason Associates launches the JasonHub - a technological tool that consists on a corporate community channel provided to clients that works as a social game within their companies.

Most recently Jason Associates developed the web-based platform The Talent City. Launched in 2011, in partnership with EDP, Grupo Imprensa, Novabase, PT and Unicer this project consists on a virtual space where client companies and young talents merge their professional interests. Currently with around 19 600 members, a number that increases day by day, the Talent City is an innovative online platform where students can access information about the job market, career options and job opportunities. For companies it is a channel of communication of their Employer Brand through campaigns and also a huge data base for recruitment.

The competitive advantage of the company thus relies in its ability to provide superior value to the Portuguese talent community in general and to its corporate clients through web-tools and HR projects of change that efficiently transform organizational behaviors and strongly impact the employers' happiness and the client company's performance in a sustainable way. This is consistent with the definition of competitive advantage previously adopted in this dissertation as the firm's ability to produce superior net benefit than its competitors through a greater differentiation of its services.

“Companies come to Jason Associates looking for creative and innovative approaches that can provoke behavioral transformations in the people elements that constitute their teams of collaborators.”

In the origin of this competitive advantage is indeed the innovative approach through which Jason Associates offers its services in talent consultancy issues and organizational challenges, designing tailor made solutions, methodologies and technologies that improve effectiveness and increase value for its clients and the Portuguese talent community in general:

“The implementation of this kind of services requires creative and profoundly innovative approaches. People have little time and it is necessary to create strong motives that will make them to adhere to another project. Normally we create online games, collaborative platforms, videos, programs of reconnaissance; we create architectures of collaboration that approximate people on their personal affinities.”

The company has been proving its ability to overcome consecutively the dogmas in the market of Portuguese Talent innovating both in the way it develops its business and in the way its activity can impact positively the talent community. In the last years, Jason Associates team has been supporting a lot of companies to leverage the engagement of their employees with a strong focus in the transformation of behaviors through emotions rather than processes. Furthermore, it has been part of the strategy of the firm not only to keep a post-project relationship with its clients, through a close monitoring of the results of the consulting solutions proposed by Jason Associates, but also through a strong marketing communication effort that aims to keep clients aware of the company's practices and projects. Consequently, the company has been able to develop the capacity of creating long lasting close relationships with its clients. This is truly evidenced in this client's testimonial:

“That sensation of “Yes, we can”, “The sky is the limit” was a sensation that has been present since the first work contact with Jason until today. I would add to this ability to rip horizons, to be truly innovative the determination that Jason brings to conceive a win-win partnership, this is, we clearly understood that everything that Jason would do with us would be in a sense to let us both become a reference in Portugal, in a innovative project in the health area.”

Hence, the origin of Jason Associates' competitive advantage results from two different, yet related, capabilities:

- Capability to innovative in terms of project solutions for its clients, which enables its ability to provide unique and creative solutions and structures seeking to incite behavioral changes that create real impact on business enterprises, creating value to clients in a sustainable way.
- Capability to sustain long-lasting relationships with its clients, which enables a continuum need by the companies to order Jason Associates services in the long-term: *“We have a recurrence rate close to 100%. The experience is in fact so good that lot of times the reaction is: “What else can you do for us?”*

4.1.2.2 The development of Capabilities at Jason Associates

The gathered data emphasizes that in order to develop its capability of innovativeness Jason Associates need people who apart from their academic and professional skills have a high level of creativity. To achieve this, while other consulting firms have traditionally hired professionals with years of experience, at Jason Associates the recruitment policy places a major importance on the collaborators' personality. Pedro Brito, one of the Managing Partners of Jason Associates, expresses that underpinning the development of such innovative projects is a diversified group of "heroes" working for the company, with a miscellaneous of different academic and professional experiences. This is extremely important to potentiate the conception of new and creative ideas for the clients' projects. Furthermore, the company's leader also transmits that the only thing "Jason People" have to have in common is a passion about life and enjoyment for assisting people pursuing their happiness:

"Our strategy is simple, we recruit regular heroes"⁵; "We recruit people based on who they are and not what they do (...); The academic and professional diversity of our team brings us a great value (...) We have a person who was a dancing teacher, a person who worked in Fast Moving Consumer Goods, a person who used to be a Chef, an agronomist (...) this diversity allows us to transform what is the initial clay to a much solid solution because it has a lot of different perspectives on the problem. It creates diversity; it creates a solution that is way more adapted to what is the common opinion in the market (...)"

It is this way clear that the recruitment policy of Jason Associates entails hiring people from several industries to broaden the existing skills and capabilities inside the organization. This is a way to bring new ideas, expertise and different types of knowledge to the company. As a result, Jason Associates is able to develop new work practices and to keep renovating new ways of doing things.

Moreover, to develop the innovativeness of the projects to its clients, Jason Associates also uses external sources. The company cooperates with other stakeholders for the

5 www.jasonassociates.com

remaining skills and capabilities to develop its services. The company's identified types of collaborations were:

- Strategic partnerships with software companies: namely Quodis, Ricochete Filmes, MBarbaraM, Seegno and Muchbeta which provide audiovisual and web-based software solutions that support the creative process of the company's projects.
- Strategic partnerships with other companies: from what is an example the partnership with EDP, Grupo Imprensa, Novabase, PT and Unicer to develop the web-based platform The Talent City launched in 2011.
- Networking: The consultants get involved in networking such as conferences (organized or not by Jason Associates); workshops organized by the company; presentation at universities and companies as well as speaking sessions to get an understanding of the contemporary tendencies in the HR consulting market or related issues, the latest services and gather information on its services.⁶

Relationship Capital

Aiming to get closer to their customers Jason Associates make use of different schemes such as a strong focus on communication tools developed in-house but also through social events. In fact, in 2010 Jason Associates launched the company's newsletter- You Magazine- and the company's Handbook- Your HED- sent to clients and potential clients.

“We are the most aggressive company in this market in terms of marketing, not advertising but marketing. Our approaches are very aggressive, very innovative and people think: “There they are” and we have a lot of this feedback(...) it is a format with

6 - Leaderquest 2008 : Initiative of Jason Associates, Jornal Público and Harvard Clube de Portugal.
- CEO Conference organized by Jason Associates in partnership with Barclays
- Jason Breakfast series
- “Essences of Leadership” was a workshop that Jason Associates organized to introduce CEO's to Swami Parthasarathy

a strong audiovisual component, with videos, with books and magazines and this causes an approximation with the current clients and with whom we do not work yet.”

However the close relationship Jason Associates has with its clients arrives primarily from the direct interactions with customers, specifically with emotional component attached to the nature of the projects developed by the company - transforming people behaviors within an organization requires working closely with corporate clients in a collaborative environment. As Raquel Lemos, one of the company's consultant states:

“With people we create relationships and not transactions (...) the relationship with clients go beyond a project relationship and I believe that the network we create is no longer just a network of services but a network of relationships, our clients tend to be in love with us and to recommend us to other clients.”

Likewise, Jason Associates' organizational culture has a central role as the main differentiating factor in what concerns creating a sense of trust with clients and consequently sustain long-lasting relationships with them. The organizational culture and values of the company promotes the passion of its consultants in everything they do. This passion, transmitted to clients and to the market in the elaboration/presentation of the proposals to clients and in the projects' realization, is quite visible in the following client testimonial:

“More that all the technology, tools, skills, what Jason brought to this project... what I felt during the eight months in which we worked intensively was that Jason was a natural extension of our company.(...) truly feeling that Jason was bringing passion and a happiness concept to our collaborators. It was a unique experience.”

Furthermore, the relationship capital with the clients also arrives from a set of activities developed by the company. For instance, a strong monitoring is incurred from the moment Jason Associates receives a project proposal from its clients, until the project is approved and completed. If the collaborators understand that there is not a fit between the client's proposal and the organizational culture/values of Jason Associates, the project will be rejected:

“Evidently, we cannot afford to choose 100% our clients. But we do is: our investment depends largely on the relationship we have with the clients (...); “we have to recognize ourselves in the project.”

This fit between the company’s and client’s culture increases the quality and the chances for success of the projects selected and developed by Jason Associates. Only this way it is possible to provide excellence to clients and to create a personal bond with the client that surpasses the professional link. No less important is the follow-up monitoring of the projects’ impact client company’s performance through an Individual Action Plan.

“The majority of the projects have an associated assessment model, according to the initiatives. It can go from a business case to questionnaires, focus groups (...)”

In the table 4.1 there is a brief chronological description of the events that contributed to the position where the company stands today.

Table 4.1: Summary of relevant decisions for the current position of Jason Associates

Year	Decision	Rational	Impact in current capabilities
04	Definition of positioning in terms of Executive Search Talent.	Conviction of the existence of a market segment with such needs.	All the development capabilities was supported in that decision
04	First consultancy project to support of the establishment of a Bank	Meet the different customer needs	More openness to incur in different strategies
05	Office opening in Lisbon (Av.Liberdade)	Central Localization that allows good access for clients and candidates.	More stability
07	Initiative Mão na Mão organized by Fundação PT, J	Social responsibility project.	Minimum
08	Development of the social network-The Star Tracker	Conviction of the existence of a market segment with such needs.	Increase in the company's notoriety, Greater openness to international projects
09	Office opening in Oporto	Company's growth	National Expansion
09	Launch of the Corporate Happiness Formula	assist candidates to evaluate alternative scenarios and career options.	New clients
10	Repositioning of the services of Jason Associates- marketing the concepts of corporate engagement, Human Marketing, Human Experience Design, Corporate Channel – Social webs for clients	Conviction of the existence of a market segment with such needs.	Diversifying the company's services
10	Launch of the firm's Newsletter You Magazine	Reinforce the relationship with current clients, attract new clients	Ease to communicate systematically with clients
10	Development of the technological tool Jason Hub in partnership with Muchbeta.	Improve the service to clients	Diversifying the company's services
11	Development of The Talent City in cooperation with PT, Novabase, EDP, Unicer, Philip Morris International.	Conviction of the existence of a market segment with such needs.	Exponential notoriety of the company, New clients

Source: Author's analysis of the evidences

5. Discussion

In the beginning of this dissertation we proposed to analyze Jason Associates under the research question: *“How the firm has developed the capabilities that are in the origin of its competitive advantage?”*

Having identified the capabilities in the origin of the competitive advantage of Jason Associates and once gathered the necessary data to understand how they were developed through time, the present chapter endeavors to identify and examine the resources possessed by Jason Associates that underpin the company's capabilities in

light of the Resource-based-View theory, specifically through the VRIO model developed by Jay Barney (1997). For resources we will also use Barney's definition as the tangible and intangible assets of a firm used to conceive and implement strategies than enhance its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991).

Barney (1997) argues that, to be a secure basis for competitive advantage, a firm's resources must display four attributes: they should be Valuable to exploit opportunities and/or neutralize threats in firm's environment; they must be Rare in the sense that it must not be possessed by a large number of competing firms; they should also be Inimitable, namely for unique Historical conditions, Causal Ambiguity and Socially complex reasons. The question of Organization concerns the firm's ability to exploit the resource/Capability. Hence, this attribute corresponds to the capabilities that have already been identified in the Data Analysis chapter.

Through the analysis of the gathered content on Jason Associates' activity it was possible to organize the sources underpinning the development of the company's capabilities into three main resources - the firm's Organizational Culture, Human Capital and Creative Process (Table 4.1). Those resources are the "inputs" that, when integrated or bundled in a certain way produce an "output", which in this case are the company's identified capabilities, corresponding to the "O" of the VRIO analysis.

Table 5.1: Inputs for the Capabilities

Resources for Capabilities		
Resources/Capabilities	Innovative Solutions for clients	Strong relationships with clients
Organizational Culture	Of sharing and team work	Of excellence with informality and trust
Human Capital	Heterogeneous Team-diversified perspectives	Informality, with positive effect on trust
Creative Process	Design unique tailor-made solutions	-

5.1 VRI Analysis of Jason Associates' Resources and Capabilities

5.1.1 VRI Analysis of Jason Associates' Resources

Individually neither of the identified resources of Jason Associates is Valuable. Alone, the organizational culture of passion and team-work; the company's Human Capital or the Creative process are necessary but not sufficient conditions to innovate in terms of project solutions for clients or to sustain a long-lasting relationship with them. The real value of these resources lies in the way Jason Associates integrates them to produce outputs that allow it to seize opportunities in the market.

There is not a market where firms can buy Organizational Culture as it is a firm-specific characteristic which is built through time. The culture of Jason Associates is commonly named by its collaborators as a culture of genuine passion, internally called the "Jason trance". It is also a culture of team-work where there is a common discretion to share knowledge, feedback, ideas and emotions in an open and unfiltered way and this is, according to the company's leader, the first step into the development of a spirit of engagement of the collaborators to the company. As a result of the "*passionate state of mind*" all the collaborators are extremely committed and engaged to fulfill all the clients' demands and therefore, Jason Associates is able to achieve excellent levels of clients' satisfaction what in turn, sustains and reinforces the relationship with them.

"This environment helps our creative process to be naturally more fluid and constructed in a collaborative way" (...) "Teams that rely on their superiors and peers have less fear of sharing their ideas, leading to more creative environments, making room for new concepts, products and services."

Jason Associates demonstrates this way the role culture plays in competitive advantage. According to the company's top management, the firm's success can be accredited to the "personality" of the company; a culture of altruism and trust that provides employees with both the desire and motivation to run an "extra-mile" to find and generate creative solutions that truly meet the customers' needs, far from the traditional approaches of the majority of other HR consulting firms in the market. It is this way a rare resource.

“Our passionate state of mind is reflected in all the interactions between the consultants and the clients, candidates or stakeholders, who become a lot of times enthralled by the experience of working with us”

When asked how the concept of Jason Associates was born, the co-founder answer is simple: *“We wanted to be happy, make others happy and only then make money.”* This philosophy has been since the beginning the backbone of the company’s strategy. All the collaborators understand its importance and review themselves in it. In the table it is evidenced various aspects that distinguish the organizational culture as socially complex phenomena, thus confirming its inimitability.

The Human Capital constitute a valuable asset of Jason Associates, was it not a Human Resources Consulting company. First and foremost, Jason Associates’ capability to provide innovative creative solutions for its clients on talent consultancy issues and organizational challenges is only possible due to the diversity of backgrounds constituting the team collaborating with the company. Hence, it has been part of the firm’s strategy to always have a diversely blended team of people who can contribute with different perspectives on the same problem.

“We believe we have a regular team of heroes, passionate and determinate in their mission.”

The heterogeneity of the collaborators at Jason Associates and the existent difference across individuals in terms of their previous job-related skills and talents makes the company’s human resources a rare and inimitable resource and the company makes use of the rare characteristics of their employees to gain a competitive advantage.

The Creative Process at Jason encloses company’s own understanding and vision of the specific needs of the clients in order to design unique tailor-made solutions and structures. More than offering a consulting project proposal that encompasses specifically the problem suggested by a client company, the teams of collaborators at Jason Associates have the ability to recommend different solutions that most of the time

surpass both the client perspectives and the traditional approaches in the Human Resources Consulting market. As one of the collaborators states:

“All this variety of initiatives makes clients to ask us how do we get inspired and how our creative process works (...)”

This is done through a brainstorm that involves collecting different perspectives on the same problem from people inside and outside the boundaries of the firm. Furthermore, Jason Associates counts on a team of Advisors as a source of inspiration and advisement (João Cotrim de Figueiredo, Luís de Freitas, Rui Correia Nunes) that bring together different sources of expertise.

In the creative process of Jason Associates' service solutions, the company gathers information through non-intrusive and highly creative approaches which involve emotionally the collaborators in order to truly recognize how the action project should be designed. Last but not least, Jason Associates has strategic partnerships with some companies -Quodis, Ricochete Filmes, MBarbaraM, Seegno and Muchbet- which provide audiovisual and web-based software solutions that support the creative process of the company's projects.

A creative process with such characteristics is rare in the market because it is client-specific, unique and it integrates singular approaches. Furthermore, bearing in mind that there is not a standard method through which the company develops the projects for its clients, it is difficult for competitor firms to replicate the creative process at Jason Associates and this creates barriers to imitability.

Table 5.2: VRI Analysis of the Resources and Capabilities

VRI Analysis of the Capabilities		
Resources/Capabilities	Innovative Solutions for clients	Strong relationships with clients
Organizational Culture	R.I	R.I
Human Capital	R	I
Creative Process	R.I	-
Capability	V.R.I	R.I

At Jason Associates, the capability to innovate in terms of project solutions for clients is the result of its ability to organize a bundle of resources (organizational culture, Human Capital and creative Process). Even though neither of the resources, alone, pass the VRI test, this capability is valuable as it allows the company to continue exploring the opportunity to provide its clients with consultancy projects in the long-term that are creative and tailor-made and it is rare because of the uniqueness of its concept in terms of the projects characteristics. Furthermore, it is difficult for other firms in this industry to imitate this capability as it involves the different perspectives of a heterogeneous team of people that are unique as human-beings.

The capability to sustain long-lasting relationships with clients is the result of the firm's ability to integrate the Human Resources and its organizational culture. The relationship with the clients is important to create value to clients that want to use the company's services. Nevertheless, alone this relationship is not valuable as it does not allow the firm to make use of opportunities nor the mitigation of the effects of eventual threats.

According to different collaborators of Jason Associates the capability to create strong relationships with the clients, particularly, in what concerns the post-project monitoring of the consulting project results on the clients' performance is relatively rare in this industry. Moreover, the difficult imitability of this capability lies in its social complexity.

Table 5.3: Organizational Culture at Jason Associates - Evidences of Inimitability

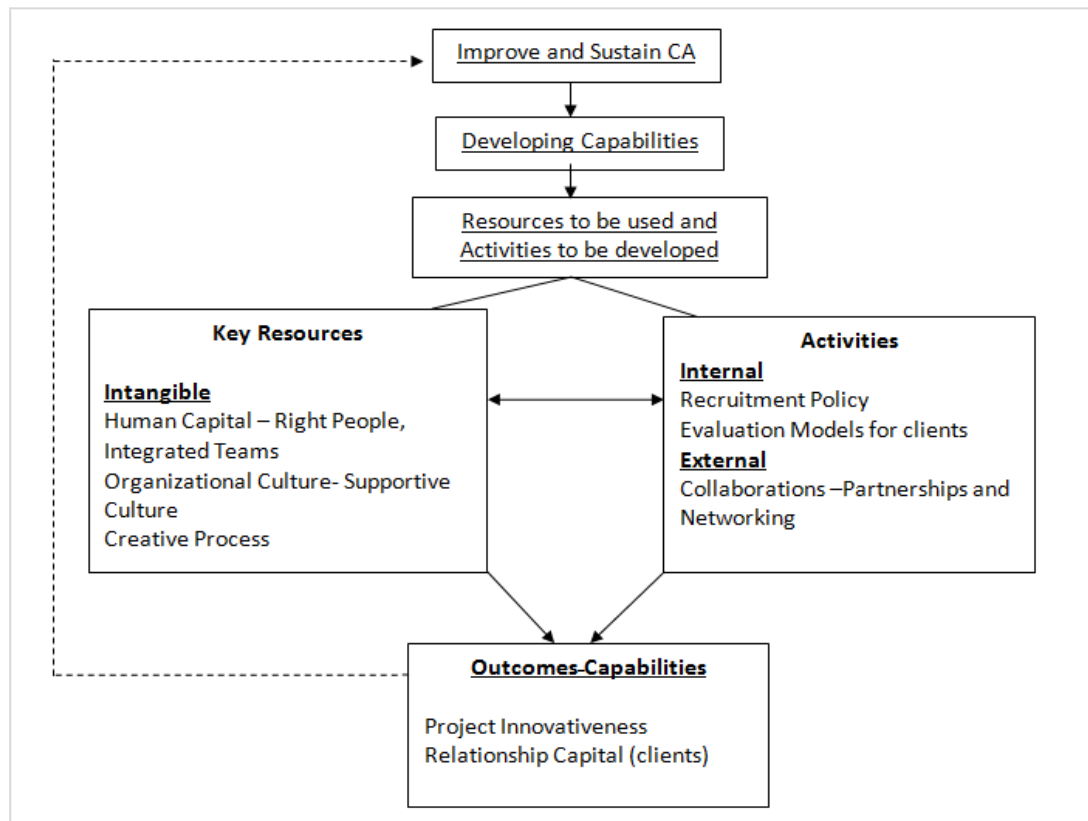
Organizational Culture - Evidences of Inimitability
<p>Socially Complex</p> <p><i>“(…) at this moment Jason Associates is in between of being a Human Marketing company and a HR consulting company. And we will remain in the middle (…)”.</i></p> <p><i>“I would say that it is mainly because of the relationship that we create, the transparency”.</i></p> <p><i>“The more you grow in the firm’s hierarchy…and we do not call it that way…but the more you grow in the company the kind of relationships you create with people goes a lot beyond than just a project kind of relationships”.</i></p> <p><i>“ (….) I can say Pedro Brito is like an informal coach of many clients who call: “I have this problem in hands” even when it is not related with HR, even ,and a lot of times, if it is not a project developed by us, they call for advice: “What do you think I should do in this case?” or “Can we have a breakfast ?I have a problem that has been worrying me” or “Let’s go lunch”.</i></p> <p><i>“It is an organization that does not have defined hierarchies. Everybody feels appropriate, everyone feels he/she is the owner of the company, where everybody can contribute and where everyone can bring, beside his competency and capacity of execution, passion, enthusiasm and most of all bring all his humanity to the work. And to bring humanity to the work is not possible by decree, and you cannot write it in a job contract”.</i></p> <p><i>“I would say that this expression is the existence mood of Jason: “When people feel happy, they do more, better and for a longer period of time”, this is de mood behind all our projects…both consulting and recruitment projects”.</i></p>

Table 5.4: Human Capital at Jason Associates - Evidences of Inimitability

Human Capital	
Socially Complex	
<i>"We have to hire those who like to do "well the good".</i>	
<i>"The professional and academic diversity brings a great value to the company"</i>	
<i>"Imagine that we were all very similar from the technical-professional point of view or academic background..."</i>	
<i>"When we want to be happy, make others happy and only then make money, this is...naturally this has a great impact in everything we do (...)"</i>	
<i>"(...) when we are interacting with a client it is evident that we have to keep measures of profitability of the projects, but that is not our major concern (...)"</i>	
<i>"(...) This has naturally a great impact which is the creation of a close personal relationship with those people with whom we interact."</i>	

Table 5.5: Creative Process at Jason Associates - Evidences of Inimitability

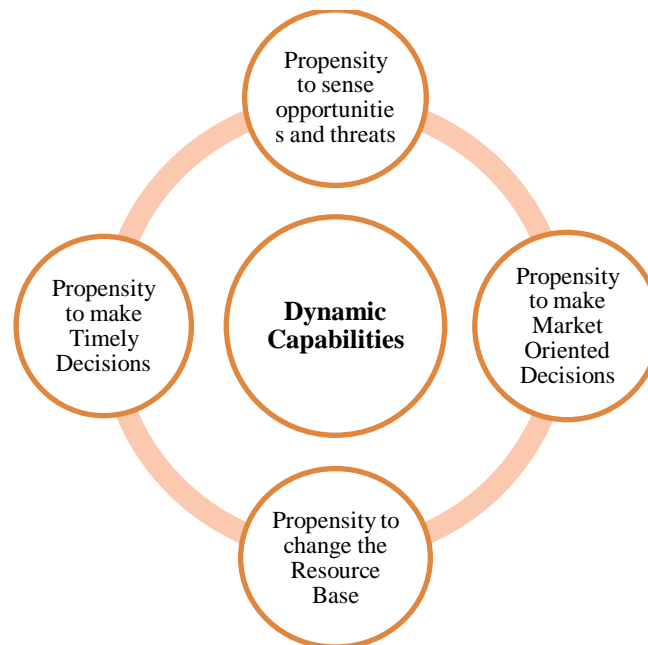
Creative Process	
Causal Ambiguity	Socially Complex
<i>"People come looking for us to ask us for things"</i>	<i>"We always do a group test before...we talk with the team and with external stakeholders to ask: "What do you think?" and these results in a tremendous auditing (...)"</i> <i>"(...) because they are projects related to RH and sometimes there is the need to share themes that are particularly difficult (...)"</i> <i>"(...) I feel that rather than a traditional approach, and to replicate formulas that we already used to other clients no...we tend to customize what we offer and to surprise the client (...)"</i> <i>"When they are place at the middle of a road or in the middle of a forest...we create simulated situations that will have an impact of their behavior (...)"</i> <i>"We try to create experiences that allow people to grow or to transform his behavior (...)"</i> <i>"We do the three things: We create experiences that transform behaviors and, by the way, in a an attractive package indeed"</i>

Figure 5.1: Logic Model of the Process of Creating Capabilities at Jason Associates

5.2 The Four Dimensions of Dynamic Capabilities at Jason Associates

Prior to connecting the topic of Dynamic Capabilities to the case in this dissertation, it is crucial to re-present the definition proposed by Barreto (2010): “*A dynamic capability is the firm’s potential to systematically solve problems, formed by its propensity to sense opportunities and threats, to make timely and market-oriented decisions, and to change its resource base.*”(p.271)

Figure 5.1: The Four Dimensions of Firms’ Dynamic Capabilities (Barreto, 2010)



Source: Adapted from the definition of Dynamic Capabilities, Barreto (2010)

Relevant Context

According to old and new suggestions on past research the pattern of dynamic capabilities depends upon market dynamism. According to Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) dynamic capabilities are important in “*moderately dynamic*” markets, the ones where “*change occurs frequently, but along with roughly predictable and linear paths*”. That is the case of the market where Jason Associates operates: the labor market in

Portugal has been characterized by high employment turnover and increasing unemployment rates in the recent years, it is this way an instable market where change occurs often alongside with the economic situation of the country.

Propensity to sense opportunities and threats

Along with the suggestions of Teece (2007), the capacity to sense opportunities and threats has being stated as essential in the topic of dynamic capabilities and it is referred as one of the four propensities in Barreto's construct of the dynamic capabilities definition (2010). Firms should integrate the capability to continuously monitor the capabilities landscape and the environmental changes.

In the Jason Associates case, it is possible to see the company's remarkable sense of opportunity towards the Portuguese talent industry situation without underestimating possible threats. The company founders were most of all very bright understanding the opportunity for the creation of new web based platforms that constitute today the two biggest assets of the company-The Star-Tracker and The Talent City – and the emergence of the Internet as a new marketplace provided the necessary conditions to launch these platforms. Until the moment Jason Associates created these online platforms no-one in the industry had realized how important would be to explore the synergies among the Portuguese people working abroad reinventing the concept of networking between themselves, in the case of the social network The Star-Tracker.

Propensity to make timely decisions

This dimension of Barreto's multidimensional construct of dynamic capabilities evaluates the firm's propensity to make a decision in the right time. The issue of timing has been received attention since the article of Adner and Helfat (2003) that stated that the content of major decisions is as much relevant as their timing.

The propensity to make timely decisions at Jason Associates relates mainly to the entrepreneurs visionary understanding of the situation that companies in Portugal were suffering in their performance due to the economic recession that begun in 2008. Indeed, after enrolling in solutions such as the "cost cutting" or what is commonly called "fast-food" solutions that are efficient in the short-term but have consequences in the long-term other alternatives started to gain relevance.

"Companies were hungry for other alternatives rather than the cost-cutting"⁷

Jason Associates quickly accomplished the emergence of these alternatives ahead of the competitors developing innovative "corporate engagement" solutions that aim to enhance the employees' commitment toward the company assuming an attitude of additional effort of their work, enhancing the company's productivity. Big players such as Pfizer Portugal and Sonae Indústria believed in the formula and implemented it, all in the name of productivity and hence revenue.

Propensity to make market-oriented decisions

According to Priem (2007) this dimension relates to the way a firm thoroughly attends to ways that grant customers a superior value. A firm should be able to effectively and efficiently provide greater value for customers, not only through the "timing" but also through "content" of the managerial decisions.

Jason Associates designs services that are 100% oriented to the customer, they are tailor-made solutions, because the company collaborators are sensible to understand what clients really want to achieve in a HR project:

- Engagement of the collaborators in the project
- Transformation of the organizational behaviors
- Impact the Client company's performance in a sustainable way

⁷ Pedro Brito in Jornal Expresso

This company is capable to develop projects that enclose these three characteristics and align it with the customer expectations. It is a pure market-oriented service that entails the creation of architectures of collaboration that approximate people on their personal affinities namely through online games, collaborative platforms, videos, programs of reconnaissance among others.

Propensity to change the resource base

The propensity to change the resource base is also a crucial part of a firm dynamic capability. It can be interpreted as the firm's ability to incur in changes of its resources but also routines or capabilities. In Jason Associates case the ability to change the resource base is majorly related to the firm reconfiguration of its Human Capital, particularly in what regards the heterogeneity of the company's Human Resources in order to entail the ability to respond to a variety of client needs and situations that call for novel responses.

In sum, applying Barreto's theoretical framework to Jason Associates case it is possible to see that the company shows the four author's proposed propensities that constitute the definition of Dynamic Capabilities. This way, beside the internal dimension of the company previously analyzed using the RBV framework; we have a perspective on how the external dimension influences the firm's development of capabilities. Anyhow, and following the proposals of Rosenbloom (2000) the level of correlation among the different dimensions at Jason Associates is not clear.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to empirically identify the organizational capabilities underpinning Jason Associate's competitive advantage and to examine how these capabilities were developed through time. This was achieved through the collection and analysis of data and the incorporation of existing literature on this topic.

Two organizational capabilities were identified, namely the company's capability to innovate in terms of HR project solutions and the capability to sustain long-lasting relationships with clients. These capabilities are achieved by way of combining intangible resources such as Human capital, Organizational Culture, Creative Process and performing internal and external activities that include the recruitment policy, strategic partnerships and networking activities.

The VRIO analysis for each of the firm's resources and organizational capabilities demonstrates that individually neither of the identified resources of Jason Associates is Valuable. Alone, the organizational culture of passion and team-work; the company's Human Resources or the Creative process are necessary but not sufficient conditions to innovate in terms of project solutions for clients or to sustain a long-lasting relationship with them. The real value of these resources lies in the way Jason Associates integrates them to produce outputs that allow it to seize opportunities in the market.

One main implication for managers arising from this study refers to the understanding that the success of firms operating in moderately dynamic environments depends on how managers balance resources and flexibility to adapt to changes in the environment in order to enhance their products and services. This is clearly evidenced through the analysis arriving from Barreto's four proposed dimensions of Dynamic Capabilities.

Nevertheless, the present study has limitations. Firstly, it was based on an inductive approach through the analysis of one company and a total of two organizational capabilities. Hence, the company may possess additional capabilities which were not studied and this constitutes an opportunity for new studies to identify other capabilities

and illustrate how they are created. Furthermore, generalizing the findings may be limited to the company in question or to the Human Resources Consulting industry. This way it is important to develop future studies involving other companies as well as other related industries involving other types of consulting services. Secondly, the main findings of the VRIO analysis of the capabilities and resources in this study were drawn through a personal understanding of the data gathered from the four interviews with the company's collaborators. Hence, there might be a sense of subjectivity in the presented results. One way to overcome this subjectivity would be to develop quantitative studies to measure the level of correlation of the resources and the company's superior level of performance regarding other companies operating in the same market. For instance, in order to quantitatively evaluate the degree to which the heterogeneity of the company's human capital is a key resource underpinning the company's organizational capability to innovate it would be important to design a questionnaire and send it to a set of companies in the same industry and ask the companies' staff to indicate the degree to which having an academic education that is not directly related to the function they are performing had contributed to bring in new ideas to the company.

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List of Websites

Jasson Associates: www.jasonassociates.pt

APG: http://www.apg.pt/downloads/file101_pt.pdf

HR Global: <http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/global/Pages/default.aspx>

Associação Portuguesa de Gestores e Técnicos de Recursos Humanos: <http://www.apg.pt/>

Appendixes

Appendix I: Jason Associates- Sales Evolution (2004-2011)

	Janeiro	Fevereiro	Março	Abril	Maio	Junho	Julho	Agosto	Setembro	Outubro	Novembro	Dezembro	TOTAL
2011	201.200	237.285	136.473										574.958
2010	102.983	94.638	123.194	109.597	100.297	82.408	73.445	70.184	133.382	120.669	146.692	94.413	1.251.902
2009	108.425	17.483	129.910	120.057	82.031	109.825	115.973	108.755	127.213	141.072	217.583	152.816	1.431.142
2008	183.333	78.054	97.449	78.193	118.953	114.808	188.532	131.767	134.734	91.096	100.777	135.375	1.453.070
2007	99.800	107.333	105.733	158.165	106.823	136.004	199.758	84.867	38.800	117.541	142.247	119.093	1.416.164
2006	37.200	35.367	59.250	59.387	78.914	61.000	66.917	64.333	64.497	61.555	121.167	57.020	766.606
2005	41.600	28.267	32.000	14.610	53.187	14.500	26.167	19.500	24.000	24.833	17.500	43.367	339.529
2004											28.000	7.167	35.167

Appendix II: Jason Associates - Clients Evolution (2004 - 2011)


Year	Total Number of Clients
2004 (Nov./Dec.).	3
2005	28
2006	50
2007	84
2008	112
2009	138
2010	159
2011 (Apr.)	167

Appendix III: Jason Associates - Human Resources (2004-2011)

Year	Entradas	Saídas	Total
2004	1	0	1
2005	4	0	5
2006	8	0	13
2007	10	7	16
2008	10	7	19
2009	5	7	17
2010	6	4	19
Abr-11	2	2	19

Appendix IV: The Star Tracker- web social network overview

www.thestartracker.com/login.php?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thestartracker.com%2Findex.php



Login
Email
Password
☐ Remember Me
[Forgot your password? Click here](#)
Login »


Sign Up
Sign Up Code
Don't have an invitation code? Maybe your friends are members of The Star Tracker and you can ask them.
Sign Up »

Welcome to The Star Tracker

The Star Tracker is an invitation-only niche social network that aims to connect and empower Global Portuguese Talent around the world.

With over 33,000 members in over 250 cities of the world, in 136 countries The Star Tracker is embracing the Portuguese diaspora and believes that social cohesion and cultural promotion are determinant to perpetuate a sense of belonging to the Portuguese global tribe. Our members are Portuguese citizens that believe that despite our global distribution we are one people.

TST members recognize talent as a universal and inclusive opportunity to agglutinate fellowmen and are determined to collaborate towards the promotion of our country's brand through the valuable achievements of our talents around the globe, but also to promote the emergence of meritocracy, diversity and inclusion, through positive and peaceful citizenship.




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Adesões online para novos clientes até 31 de Maio de 2011

Peça já o seu cartão »

*Exemplo para um financiamento de €1.500, com reembolso no prazo de 12 meses e à Taxa Anual Nominal (TAN) de 25,99%.




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Appendix V: TheTalent City- Website Overview

 TORNA-TE FÁ /  CONVIDA UM AMIGO

DA-NOS O TEU FEEDBACK

TALENT CITY

REGISTAR / ENTRAR



14635 HABITANTES

BEM-VINDO À TALENT CITY

A cidade onde podes preparar o teu sucesso profissional.
Contacta com empresas, encontra oportunidades e obtém orientação.

REGISTA-TE JÁ > / MAIS INFO

Appendix VI: Jason Associates- Corporate Happiness Formula

Jason's Happiness Formula

Fórmula aplicada por mais de 1000 profissionais em 2009.

A Jason Associates lançou no início de 2009 a Fórmula da Felicidade Corporativa. Esta fórmula foi inicialmente criada com o objectivo de promover uma auto-reflexão sobre as variáveis que acreditamos serem determinantes para o estímulo e satisfação profissional. Clarificando o nível de "fit" actual com as suas funções, com a sua chefia, cultura e contexto da empresa, será capaz, de forma consciente, de tomar melhores decisões na sua vida profissional. A maior parte das pessoas que temos oportunidade de conhecer têm um traço em comum – não se conhecem suficientemente bem para tomar boas decisões ou fazer boas escolhas na sua vida. Quantas vezes olhamos para trás e pensamos: "devia ter feito outra escolha...ou...devia ter decidido de forma diferente...".

Parar para reflectir sobre quem somos enquanto pessoas e profissionais não é propriamente um exercício diário. Faça a si próprio perguntas como: Quais são os meus talentos? Quais são "aquelas" características que me distinguem da maior parte das pessoas que conheço? Em que tipo de ambiente profissional me sinto mais realizado? Com que tipo de pessoas gosto de trabalhar? E em que tipo de cultura? Qual é a minha moeda de reconhecimento? Quais são os meus medos? O que gosto efectivamente de fazer? - Se não souber responder a estas perguntas, Encorajamo-lo visitar www.jasonassociates.com e a experimentar, reflectir e inspirar-se na Fórmula da Felicidade Corporativa da Jason Associates.

CHF=[▲F2R+▲F2C+▲F2P]

Appendix VII: Jason Associates' Newsletter – YOU MAGAZINE



Appendix VIII: Clients' Testimonials (source: www.jasonassociates.com)**a) Business Testimonials**

Nuno Varandas, Cisco→ In 2007, Cisco decided to create a centralized European Sales Servicing in Portugal. The challenge was to create this centre in about 12 weeks, recruiting almost a 60 talented multi-linguistic team.

NV: “Quando há dois anos me foi proposto a ideia de montar um centro de suporte em Portugal, para cerca de 65 pessoas, eu liguei ao Tiago a pedir-lhe ajuda: Tenho nas mãos este bebé, preciso de ajuda!

Mais do que toda a tecnologia, ferramentas, skills que a Jason trouxe para este projecto, aquilo que eu senti durante os 8 meses que trabalhamos muito intensamente foi sentir que a Jason era quase uma extensão natural da Cisco. Foi olhar para o Pedro, o Tiago, para toda a equipa e realmente sentir o que a Jason trazia de paixão e o conceito de felicidade que trazia para para os nossos colaboradores. Isso foi algo que foi uma experiencia única. Eu estou há 9 anos na Cisco e realmente nunca estive num projecto que me tenha dado tanto prazer e eu sinto também sinto também da parte da Jason que eles são capazes de fazer sentir o cliente feliz e realizado. Todo o conceito, toda a forma como a Jason abordou o tema, o conceito de..e eu lembro-me que nós organizamos uma sessão para jovens recém-licenciados que chamamos First Business Experience e todo o conceito que era o Ticket to Happiness muito na base de ir encontrar talento, encontrar diversidade, e ir encontrar pessoas que realmente sentissem realizadas e felizes ao trabalhar na Cisco. Isso foi uma experiencia gratificante. Lembro-me das nossas inúmeras reuniões, das horas longas que passámos aqui, a trabalhar em processos de comunicação, em criar newsletters para os nossos stakeholders e em toda a criatividade e paixão. Lembro-me de olhar para a Jason e confundia se estava com colegas da Cisco, ou se estava a falar com um Business Partner e eu acho que é isso que a Jason consegue trazer aos clientes. Consegue trazer essa emoção, sentir realmente que eles fazem parte integrante da nossa organização. Lembro-me que aquilo que a Jason faz é ser capaz de antecipar um bocadinho algo que nós clientes (e o meu objectivo

obviamente era ter sucesso no recrutamento, lançar o centro de suporte), mas Jason consegue acrescentar algo mais...a Jason conseguiu..e há pouco falei do conceito da felicidade, do conceito da emoção e isso realmente ainda hoje se sente, ao fim de quase 2 anos que este centro foi aberto, a proximidade e a intimidade que nós hoje sentimos que temos com a Jason”.

Roche Team→ The relationship between Jason and Roche Farmacêutica Química begun in 2008 with an innovative project in the Portuguese HealthCare sector.

Margarida Valente: “Vocês para nós eram uma empresa de caça talentos, nós não vos víamos de outra forma e realmente depois de passarmos o briefing, quando vieram à Roche apresentar a proposta para este projecto inovador, o entusiasmo com que apresentaram e mostraram a vossa proposta foi tal que nos cativaram também a nós.E criou-se logo uma grande empatia naquela primeira apresentação formal. Realmente isso tem sido notório em todos os elementos que comunicam connosco e eu acho que isso é notório ver não só da minha parte mas também dos meus colegas. Vê-se claramente que nós já não somos Roche e Jason mas estamos os dois a trabalhar para o mesmo objectivo comum”.

Levi Gonçalves: “Eu acho que um factor crítico de sucesso da Jason teve a ver com a identificação de parceiros neste caso de consultores, que ajudassem na construção da proposta. Nós notámos claramente esse cuidado, quando nos foi apresentada a proposta nós vimos na mesma uma linguagem que tem tudo a ver connosco.”

José Gorjão: “Aquilo que mais me tem impressionado na relação que tenho tido com a Jason é precisamente a capacidade de todos os intervenientes, diálogo que é quase como uma folha em branco, ajudarem a empresa pensar de uma perspectiva diferente sobre o projecto que ela propõe à Jason. Isto é, aquela sensação, de que “Yes, we can”, “The sky is the limit”, foi uma sensação que acompanhou desde o primeiro contacto até aos dias de hoje no trabalho com a Jason. Eu acrescentaria a esta capacidade de rasgar

horizontes, ser verdadeiramente inovador, a vontade que a Jason coloca, numa parceria win-win, isto é, percebemos claramente que tudo o que a Jason viesse a fazer connosco era no sentido de por um lado tornarmo-nos ambos referência em Portugal, num projecto inovador na área da saúde”.

Appendix IX: Interviews

1. Interview with Pedro Brito- Managing partner of Jason Associates

MPM: Como é que surgiu a ideia de fundar a Jason?

PB: Na altura tanto eu como o Tiago já tínhamos experienciado a consultoria de recursos humanos e queríamos três coisas: um ser feliz, dois fazer os outros felizes e três ganhar dinheiro. Este é o Framework que aqui passa. Tendo em consideração a experiência que tínhamos havia um paradigma que nós achávamos que não fazia sentido nenhum que era aquilo que diz respeito ao recrutamento das empresas, quer as empresas de recrutamento, quer os clientes, inicialmente faziam o recrutamento com base na experiência profissional. Ou seja, quando procuravam um director financeiro, quando procuravam um engenheiro electrotécnico o que fosse...procuravam alguém que já tivesse experiência naquela função. Isso vai completamente contra a natureza humana, porquê? Porque nós temos uma serie de aptidões interpessoais, vontades, interesses, necessidades, receios e aquilo que nós fazemos não é necessariamente aquilo que mais queremos fazer. Portanto, aquilo que procurámos fazer foi criar uma metodologia numa fase inicial e explicar aos clientes que não vamos ignorar a experiencia, é importante, mas vamos olhar para outra dimensão que tem a ver com aquilo que é o potencial da pessoa. E o potencial tem a ver com quais é que são os seus talentos, quais é que são as suas preferências, as suas necessidades, os seus desejos, aquilo que faz mais fit com a organização.

Muitas vezes os jovens licenciados olham para variáveis que são relevantes mas são curtas ou seja, a compensação, a empresa, o projecto, se a marca é gira...isso serve para te compensar o “período de lua de mel” que são 3 meses, 6 meses, que é a fase em que tudo é novo...os colegas, a empresa, é tudo uma experiência nova. Passado esse tempo entramos numa altura de casamento, e o que acontece muitas vezes é que começamos a dar mais importância a outras variáveis que no momento da entrevista e do processo não tivemos em consideração: a cultura da organização, o ambiente, a forma como se

comemora, se é mais formal ou menos informal, as pessoas com quem eu vou trabalhar. Uma das variáveis que é mais relevante, e esta foi um aspecto fundamental na metodologia que criámos, é a relação com a chefia, porque é determinante na forma como se desenrola o desenvolvimento da carreira e o desenvolvimento pessoal de uma pessoa.

Portanto a forma como nós imaginámos a Jason foi uma mistura entre aquilo que seria uma empresa na área de consultoria de RH, com “A Vida é Bela”. Criar uma experiência, e uma agência de comunicação e marketing. Isto foi como pensamos na altura. Era muito difícil imaginar como é que ia correr, depois naturalmente foi desenvolvendo para outras áreas de negócio e com um procedimento um bocadinho mais claro. Ao início só fazíamos executive search, o nosso focus era 100% recrutamento e atracção de talento, que surgiu com a necessidade de fazer esta diferenciação no mercado ou seja, não ignorar a experiência profissional mas ter em conta aquilo que é o talento e o potencial. Com o objectivo pessoal de “sermos felizes, fazer os outros felizes, e ganhar dinheiro”.

MPM: E porque é que toda a gente que conhece a Jason ninguém fica indiferente? Porque é que uma empresa que contracta os serviços da Jason....tanto os colaboradores da Jason como os colaboradores dessas empresas falam todos de uma paixão nos projectos e da informalidade com que as coisas aconteceram. Isso está definido ou é uma coisa que acontece por acaso?

PB: Não acontece por acaso mas é uma coisa que é inconsciente, existem procedimentos (como é que deve ser feito) existem regras, está intimamente ligado com aquilo que é a cultura delinear da empresa. Quando nós queremos ser felizes, fazer os outros felizes e só depois ganhar dinheiro. Naturalmente que isto impacta em tudo o que fazemos e portanto quando estamos a interagir com um cliente evidentemente que temos de manter medidas de rentabilidade dos projectos, mas essa não é uma preocupação vigente. É muito natural que a personalidade das pessoas com quem contactamos, e naturalmente que a chave está muitas vezes no recrutamento (já te explicarei como o fazemos), temos de contratar pessoas que gostam de fazer “bem o bem”. Isto naturalmente tem um impacto muito grande na criação de uma relação muito pessoal com as pessoas com quem interagimos, ou seja, há um contacto de pele quer com as pessoas que nos visitam, (tu, um candidato, o que seja), quer com os clientes que muitas vezes acabam por ficar com uma relação de amizade connosco porque são projectos relacionados com RH e às vezes há necessidade de partilhar temas que são mais difíceis. Dizemos as coisas com bastante apreço (7.31) e as pessoas respeitam muito isso.

Eu diria que é sobretudo pela relação que criamos, pela transparência que também dizemos ou seja os candidatos que vêm, os profissionais que nos visitam, uma questão que não os deixa indiferentes é o facto de darmos feedback. No final da conversa, independentemente se gostei se não gostei eu digo-lhes: “Olha achei que foste isto, achei que foste assado.” A pessoa pode não gostar mas tem feedback na mesma e respeita. Nós sabemos que esse é o nosso papel independentemente se encontramos ou não encontramos uma oportunidade profissional. Na área da consultoria é um bocadinho diferente, na relação que temos com as pessoas. Nós escrevemos um livro que se chama YOUR HED, Human Experience Design, que clarifica um pouco aquilo que é o nosso procedimento hoje, ou seja, é um focus na transformação comportamental através das emoções, ou seja, aquilo que eu consigo fazer transformando comportamentos mais rapidamente através de uma emoção do que um processo. Se eu agora te dissesse: “Agora tens que virar a garrafa para dentro do copo 10 vezes”, esta é a regra, se eu te explicar isto de uma forma mais emocional, mais atractiva, eu consigo mais rapidamente fazer essa transformação. O experience tem a ver com esta segunda parte, com a parte da experiência da transformação. Uma coisa é ter um conteúdo, ou seja, este é o conteúdo, é isto que eu quero mudar, outra coisa é a forma como eu experimento isto, ou seja, uma das formas como se dá a transformação comportamental é por exemplo, no dia a dia, com o nascimento ou a morte de um ente querido.

(9.37) Nós tentamos criar experiências que sejam multi-pactantes que permitam a pessoa crescer ou transformar-se. Ou seja eu posso te dar um conteúdo muito bom mas que vem numa embalagem horrível, vem num embrulho espatifado...o conteúdo parece que não sabe tão bem. É a mesma coisa que ter uma refeição gourmet toda estapafada num prato de plástico. Pode ter exactamente os mesmos ingredientes, ser feita da mesma maneira que numa apresentação espectacular, num prato espectacular mas vai saber-te de maneira diferente, inevitavelmente.

Nós fazemos as três coisas: Nós criamos experiências que transformam comportamentos e, by the way, num embrulho de facto atractivo. Sabes o TalentCity?

MPM: Sim, sim!

PB: Podíamos fazer o Talent City numa forma muito simples mas o embrulho também é relevante, a forma como se comunica (com vídeos, com imagens), um bocadinho mais atractivo e isso também não passa despercebido e por isso muitas vezes somos contactados: “E afinal o que é que vocês fazem de diferente?”. E é muito simples, resume-se a isto: contratar bem, pessoas que têm uma base de valores muito sólida e muito coerente e depois também uma crença muito bem definida de que pessoas felizes,

fazem mais, melhor e durante mais tempo. Seremos felizes – equipa - fazer os outros felizes- cliente- e by the way ganhar dinheiro com isso.

MPM: A aquisição de novos clientes funciona muito por passa a palavra?

PB: Muito!

MPM: E desde que começaram têm mais clientes? Ou mais projectos mas para os mesmo clientes?

PB: Nós temos uma taxa de recorrência próxima dos 100%. Com a Jason “primeiro estranha-se, depois entranha-se”. Nós pensamos um bocadinho fora da caixa, com formatos novos e os clientes dizem: - “Epá, espectacular!”. A experiência de facto é tão boa que a reacção por vezes é: “E então o que é que nós podemos fazer mais?” e a partir daí há uma recorrência continua.

(13:03) O boca-a-boca é muito sectorial. Há o sector da Banca, há o sector farmacêutico, e o que acontece é criam-se tribos naturais de profissionais, ao nível do top management ou ao nível de recursos humanos há muito “passa a palavra” porque há fóruns que dizem: - “Epá com quem é que estas a trabalhar?”

Por outro lado nós somos fãs, e confesso que é uma estratégia claramente de desenvolvimento de negócio, que nós temos....no nosso mercado, naquilo que é a consultoria de RH, provavelmente somos a empresa mais agressiva do ponto de vista de marketing, não de publicidade mas de Marketing, ou seja, temos abordagens muito agressivas e muito inovadoras que fazem com que os clientes fiquem: “ Lá estão eles” e temos muito este feedback que envolve naturalmente a participação de clientes, com testemunhos, num formato muito audiovisual, com vídeo, com os livros, com revistas e isto faz com que haja uma aproximação de referência aos clientes com quem nós ainda não trabalhamos.

(14:38) MPM: Qual é o valor das equipas, e já sei que chegaram a ter aqui um Chef, qual é a relevância dessa diferenciação das equipas? O que é que isso traz?

PB: A diversidade profissional, académica, traz um valor muito grande que é, como eu te disse, essa consultoria (...). E para poder construir o HED (Human Experience Design) temos que ter perspectivas muito diferentes para conseguir ter criatividade, conseguir gerar novas ideias. Imagina que nós éramos todos muito parecidos do ponto de vista técnico-profissional ou background académico. Como temos uma pessoa que foi professora de dança, teve dois anos na Índia, uma outra pessoa que teve no grande consumo, uma pessoa que foi um chefe, outro que foi engenheiro agrónomo (...) Esta

diversidade permite (...) e às tantas conseguimos daquilo que era o barro inicial construir uma coisa que é muito mais sólida porque tem perspectivas muito diferentes para o mesmo problema. Cria diversidade, cria perspectivas diferentes, que tornam um problema numa solução e que é muito mais ajustada aquilo que é a opinião comum do mercado. Fazemos sempre um teste de grupo antes, vamos falar com a equipe e até com alguns stakeholders externos e pergunta-se: “O que é que vocês acham?” e às vezes dá um auditoria tremenda (...).

(17:08) MPM: A nível internacional, existe alguma estratégia? Há alguma estratégia planeada? Onde é que a Jason gostaria de chegar lá fora?

Existe interesse, mas nós tivemos uma evolução durante 3 anos que nos obrigou a nos irmos posicionando no mercado doméstico - Portugal. Ou seja, (...) nós viemos evoluindo de uma empresa de Executive Search (recrutamento), para uma empresa de consultoria e neste momento a Jason está in between de uma empresa de Human marketing e uma empresa de consultoria de RH. E vamos continuar no meio. E temos que criar ainda esse nicho... a nossa internacionalização funciona mais numa perspectiva de projectos do que numa perspectiva de escritório, provavelmente.

(25:05) MPM: E é por isso que fazem uma selecção de clientes de projectos, não é? Se virem que o projecto não traz nada de valor...

É evidente que não nos podemos dar ao luxo de escolher 100% os clientes. Mas aquilo que nós fazemos é: o nosso investimento no cliente depende muito da relação que temos com o cliente e quando nos apercebemos que por alguma razão não há fit, podem acontecer coisas (como já aconteceram), por exemplo, nós devolvemos uma factura de 100 mil euros.... nós fizemos o trabalho mas devolvemos. (...) Neste momento temos 30% Executive Search, 70% Consultoria, começou por ser 100% Executive Search e pouco a pouco a consultoria foi ganhando forma - esse também um dos nossos objectivos, não foi uma coisa que aconteceu por acaso. O que nós fizemos foi criar logo espaço...

(28:06) MPM: Há depois um acompanhamento para ver os resultados do projecto?

A maior parte dos casos tem um modelo de avaliação associado de acordo com as iniciativas que fazemos que pode ir desde um business case, a questionários, a Focus Groups e portanto na maioria das vezes, eu diria 75%, fazemos uma avaliação, um acompanhamento do cliente.

2. Interview with Raquel Lemos- Strategic Consultant of Jason Associates

MPM: Depois de já ter recolhido alguma informação um dos pontos que eu gostava de focar contigo era a relação com o cliente. Que é de proximidade, de informalidade, que há sempre um follow-up...consegues me explicar?

Raquel: Eu acho que o que nos distingue muito é a forma de nos relacionarmos com os nossos clientes...acho que há uma paridade muito grande entre nós e o nosso cliente ou seja, nem nós estamos muito subservientes nem...claro que com a perspectiva de serviço mas a perspectiva muitas vezes também é de advisory, de irmandade, de amizade. Sobrepe-se muitas vezes relações naturais de coaching, por exemplo o Pedro é que acaba sendo o coach informal (não é nessa qualidade que ele é contratado), mas coach informal de muitos clientes que ligam: - “Epá tenho este tema agora para gerir” mesmo que não seja de recursos humanos, mesmo e muitas vezes que não seja um projecto nosso, eles ligam para conselhos: “ O que é que achas que eu devia fazer neste caso?” ou “Podemos tomar um pequeno-almoço tenho aí um tema que me está a preocupar” ou “vamos almoçar”. Independentemente dos projectos há em qualquer um de nós, e quanto mais sobes na hierarquia (hierarquia que nós não chamamos assim), quanto mais sobes na Jason, o tipo de relações que as pessoas mantêm vão muito para lá de relações de projecto. O que faz com que primeiro, a mim parece-me, a rede que nós criamos já não é só de serviços é uma rede de relação e os clientes tendem a ser apaixonados por nós e a naturalmente recomendar-nos. Quantas vezes nos acontece, aliás agora no Talent City tem-nos acontecido muito, talvez pelo esforço mediático que se tem feito, mas há pedidos. As pessoas vêm à nossa procura a pedir-nos coisas, claro que sim, também fazemos o que nós chamamos de Business Development, reuniões em que pedimos para apresentar novos serviços, mas é muito comum: - “ Então ouvi dizer que vocês fazem aquelas coisas” ou “recebi a vossa revista” ou “li o vosso livro”. Há muito esta procura porque as pessoas se apaixonam pelo formato e pela abordagem um bocado diferenciadora. Depois, no cliente, por exemplo em reuniões, o que eu sinto é que em vez de haver uma abordagem tradicionalista, com a proposta e que produzimos fórmulas que já fizemos, não...nós tendemos sempre a customizar aquilo que oferecemos e também a querer surpreender o cliente e não ter coragem de lhe dizer: - “Olhe, desculpe lá por aí não, por aí nós não vamos convosco”. Nós temos a sorte de poder escolher os clientes com quem trabalhamos porque ou nós nos revemos no trabalho e quase que o faríamos cá dentro da casa se precisássemos da mesma coisa...se não forem nós não nos associamos.

MPM: Vocês tentam transpor a vossa cultura, filosofia de vida dentro da organização nos projectos que fazem aos clientes?

Raquel: Ah claro, eu diria que essa expressão é o modo de existência da Jason, “As pessoas quando estão felizes fazem mais, melhor e durante mais tempo”, é o modo que está por trás de todos os nossos projectos, tanto no lado de recrutamento, tanto pelo lado de consultoria. Portanto, nós se virmos que há um lastro de infelicidade que vai ficar atrás dos projectos...primeiro gerimos muito bem os efeitos laterais dos projectos. Imagina (4:56)

(5:14) Tentamos gerir níveis de felicidade e de conforto que não criem pontas mal fechadas. O que nós vendemos é felicidade, a graça é essa e assim como

Qualquer projecto que tu faças, seja para uma pessoa, seja para duas, seja para um grupo de pessoas

MPM: No Executive Search, como é que é feita a procura de candidatos, como é que é feita essa ponte?

Nós temos uma base de dados que ao longo dos anos se vem compondo cada vez mais. É cada vez mais um asset muito importante que nós temos. Mas para os projectos que nos caem nas mãos, nem sempre temos uma base de dados que responda a eles. O nosso “expertise” em ir buscar a pessoa certa, para uma empresa nos contrate por isso, um dos principais meios, que acho que tem a ver com a forma como nós trabalhamos, tanto com clientes como com candidatos, é nós usamos muito o que nós chamamos os nossos skills. Nós temos as nossas referencias mas são pessoas a que nós recorremos porque conhecem muito bem o mercado e sabem perfeitamente quem é que está a dar, quem é que é espectacular naquela área especifica, e temos um leque enorme dessas pessoas... ou são nossos candidatos e adoraram a experiencia de estar cá ou foram nossos colegas ou nos relacionámos de outra forma qualquer, às vezes também recorremos aos nossos contactos pessoais, também qualquer um de nós tem uma característica de networkers. Para chegar às pessoas temos várias vias : base de dados, referênciação, depois temos canais próprios e usamos muito canais profissionais. Se for preciso fazemos pesquisa directa, que é o que fazem os Head Hunters. (8:54)

(9:38) MPM-E esse fit?

10:10 RAQUEL- O que nós fazemos sempre é o que nós chamamos o “Belief Audit”, que pode ser mais profundo e pode ser feito como um assessment. Nós pedimos sempre para falar com as pessoas 360 com quem esta pessoa se vai relacionar, falamos para cima para baixo para o lado.

15:17 Quando são postos no meio da estrada, ou no meio da floresta...criamos situações simuladas que depois (...)

15:45 Criamos oito missões em que as equipas tinham vários pontos do hotel para fazer resgate de feridos

16:23 Tudo ao pormenor!

16:34 É uma componente lúdica forte que está associada a uma competência específica que nós queremos trabalhar, comunicação, trabalho em equipa,

17: 14 eles próprios protagonizaram, organizados por nós, um teatro com várias pessoas...riam de gargalhada

17:57 Nós aventuramo-nos da vida dos nossos clientes, a intervir, a apoiar...

18:33 Nós apaixonamo-nos tanto por pensar tecnicamente as coisas de acordo...adoramos pensar o imaginário das coisas. Isto tecnicamente podia ser feito de várias formas, ou em sala ou podes pensar num imaginário em que as pessoas estão completamente dentro e depois conseguem perfeitamente fazer pontes e analogias e pensar

19:11 Somos muito bons em recursos humanos mas somos muito melhores a comunicar a energia dos nossos projectos e a criar imaginários para as coisas que são atractivos.

19:35 Chamamos muitas vezes aquilo que fazemos de Human Marketing-ao mesmo tempo que trabalhamos o engagement dos trabalhadores e engagement do cliente.

Appendix X – Press releases about Jason Associates

Newspaper – OJE, October 2007

II OJE

SEGUNDA-FEIRA
8 de Outubro de 2007

EMPREGO E FORMAÇÃO

EM PARCERIA COM
Expressoemprego

STAR TRACKING

PONTO DE VI(R)AGEM NA RELAÇÃO ENTRE

De uma deslocação a Madrid surgiu a ideia de lançar uma rede para dar a conhecer os expatriados nacionais uns aos outros e lhes lembrar os aspectos positivos de Portugal. A ideia concretizou-se no Star Tracking – uma ponte de coesão e ponto de viragem na forma de estar dos portugueses lá fora. Nada mais natural que a primeira reunião tenha sido em Madrid



O Star Tracking - Odisseia do Talento "consiste numa viagem pelas principais capitais do mundo onde existem comunidades relevantes de talento luso para identificação, consulta e mobilização" dos expatriados. O projecto surgiu a partir de uma deslocação de trabalho de Tiago Forjaz a Madrid, em Maio deste ano. O partner da Jason Associates verificou que, num conjunto de pessoas do sector financeiro, os expatriados não se conheciam. A lógica "não mudou, em termos de carreira, os portugueses trabalham individualmente", sem saberem da existência de contemporâneos na mesma cidade e, mais caricato, na mesma empresa. Foi esta constatação que levou a que Tiago Forjaz quisesse criar um projecto que funcionasse como "ponto de encontro e reflexão sobre as perspectivas e oportunidades" do País. Da ideia à criação do blogue www.starttracking.org foi questão de meses. O objectivo é "alertar a sociedade para a necessidade de sermos capazes de atrair e integrar o nosso melhor talento na construção de um Portugal vencedor". Já houve um primeiro encontro de portugueses a trabalhar em Espanha: estão agendados mais dois, um em França e outro em Inglaterra, seguindo-se, em 2008, os EUA e Brasil (ver Próximas Paragens Star Tracking).

A Jason Associates investiu 125.000€ no Star Tracking. Tiago Forjaz frisa no entanto que a consultora não tem "qualquer interesse directo no projecto. Somos sponsors, tal como convidamos outras empresas" para serem patrocinadoras. Além, as que queiram estar presentes podem comprar lugares nos jantares de reunião, podendo colocar o logótipo nas respectivas mesas e ter acesso à base de dados resultante. São possíveis três tipos de patrocínio: o Galaxy, em que a empresa está presente em todos eventos; o Space-Ship, que consiste no patrocínio de um único evento; e o Star, onde podem contribuir com a sua experiência. A Jason "apenas tira o prazer de dar vida a este projecto e de contribuímos" para fazer a ponte entre expatriados. "Numa lógica de filantropia corporativa, quisemos criar uma plataforma de coesão e colaboração que permita identificar e mobilizar os expatriados portugueses para uma reflexão sobre as características do nosso povo". E, em simultâneo, fornecer-lhes informação – positiva – sobre Portugal.

PROIBIDO FALAR MAL DO PAÍS

Na parte inferior da página inicial do blogue starttracking.org lê-se "é proibido falar mal de Portugal". É a esta ideia central que norteia o projecto. O



Para Tiago Forjaz, criador do projecto, há que mudar a lógica de carreira dos expatriados portugueses

utilizador é desafiado a explorar o potencial da rede, propondo iniciativas que contribuam para "um Portugal vencedor". Mas para tal tem de se comprometer com as seguintes regras:

- Explicar porque tem orgulho em ser português;
- Fomentar o networking com portugueses;
- Participar cívica e socialmente na construção do futuro do País;
- Participar de forma activa com ideias, projectos e opiniões;
- Participar na implementação de um projecto que faça bem a Portugal;
- Divulgar o Star Tracking junto do network de amigos talentosos.

Proudly Portuguese é a insignia criada para "assumir o orgulho que a nova geração tem em ser portuguesa". E quem a utilizar (por exemplo, como assinatura no email, em apresentações, no blogue pessoal ou noutros suportes "adequados") está a contribuir para a construção de uma imagem positiva do País.

PRIMEIRA PARAGEM: MADRID

A primeira reunião do Star Tracking, com 66 participantes, teve lugar no Casino de Madrid, a 26 de Setembro. No final, surgiram três grandes certezas: quem vive fora tem orgulho de Portugal e em ser português; os expatriados não

fazem networking; e é muito importante manter o contacto, "algo que querem muito mas é preciso instituir uma rotina". Il aqui Tiago Forjaz faz a ressalva de que, "ao contrário dos norte-americanos, que tratam de negócios e só depois pensam em travar amizade, os portugueses tratam tudo a um nível mais social: primeiro pensam em conhecer a pessoa, ficar amigos, e só depois de conquistada a confiança pensam em fazer negócios". E depois, "somos um povo que se integra com extrema facilidade, mas convém não esquecer de como podemos construir relações e negócios com os nossos compatriotas".

Um dos oradores do evento foi José Filipe Torres, CEO da Bloom Consulting, empresa de branding que consta na lista das 100 mais inovadoras de Espanha. Considerado pela revista The Economist um dos especialistas mundiais em country branding, José Filipe Torres dá conferências um pouco por todo o mundo. E, segundo o mesmo, temos de assumir que a nossa criatividade é única e é um elemento diferenciador dos restantes povos. A improvisação, engenho e facilidade em identificar oportunidades são características muito próprias dos portugueses. Ou seja, a criatividade é uma grande competência crítica de Portugal. Tiago Forjaz acrescenta que a pequena dimensão do

Newspaper - Semanário Sol, November 2008

Revolução na Indústria do Talento

A Jason Associates é uma das empresas mais recentes na consultoria de gestão de recursos humanos. E não se revê na designação clássica de *executive search*: «somos uma empresa de consultoria de gestão de talento», sublinha Tiago Forjaz, um dos sócios-executivos

O CENÁRIO de crise económica foi preparado pela Jason Associates com o reforço da empresa e uma aposta no crescimento. «Passamos de uma estratégia 3-2 para uma estratégia 4-3. Isto é 4 *Advisors* e 3 *Sócios* em vez de 3 *Advisors* e 2 *Sócios*», explica o consultor.

O reforço da empresa acontece mediante a entrada de João Cotrim Figueiredo (ex-CEO da Compel) como *Advisor* com o pelouro da expansão e o ingresso de um novo *partner*, Luís Delgado (ex-Direcção de Internacional da Brite) com o objectivo de estruturar a Jason para o crescimento em contexto de internacionalização.

A consultora, fundada em 2004, fica assim com um quadro de gestão repositado por 4 *Advisors* – Pedro Casmo Costa (Inovação e Ética), António Neto Alves (Legal e Arte), Rui Nunes (Estratégia e Empreendedorismo) e João Cotrim de Figueiredo (Expansão e Disciplina) e 3 *Sócios* Executivos com a responsabilidade de desenvolvimento de negócio – Tiago Forjaz (Estratégia, Marketing, People Development), Pedro Brito (Business & Product Development) e Luís Delgado (Operações & Expansão). «Hoje somos uma equipa diversa de 19 pessoas com *backgrounds* académicos, geográficos e sectoriais diferentes, que resultam numa combinação única

de competências e *skills*, mas que tem a paixão por pessoas em comum».

A estratégia passa por apostar na solidificação da presença no Norte, através de um escritório na Porto e pelo empoderamento dos *managers* com uma lógica de especialização sectorial.

«As tecnologias para organizar e desenvolver talento. É isso que oferecemos», clarifica o consultor. Uma fronteira que se traça entre dois conceitos traduzidos numa visão: «queremos que o mercado é o mercado do talento e não o mercado da experiência».

bre a tecnologia que organiza a agenda de prioridades das empresas e da gestão da inovação, para já nem referir a partilha de conhecimento. Nesse capítulo estamos numa posição privilegiada para perceber como organizar e energizar redes sociais corpo-

implica, para uma empresa de consultoria de talento, a capacidade de dar resposta em diversidade cultural, geográfica e sectorial. «Temos sido consultados por empresas multinacionais que operam nas indústrias de ponta e que valorizam o facto de podermos realizar

«Temos estado discretamente a desconstruir os processos da indústria para surpreender o mercado numa altura de crise com uma completa revolução na forma como se opera no mercado do talento», afirma Forjaz. Uma das surpresas terá divulga-

POTENCIAL HUMANO

Recrutar é só o primeiro passo. Esta é uma das prioridades do trabalho desenvolvido pela Jason Associates. As organizações modernas precisam, depois de contratar, de saber gerir o potencial inerente a cada colaborador, de forma a maximizar o seu contributo para o negócio e o projecto. Um trabalho que a tecnologia, designadamente as redes sociais e os fóruns do *partilha de conhecimentos*, ajudam a alcançar.



«Estamos posicionados para servir os grandes clientes corporativos portugueses, sobretudo em consultoria e em contextos de internacionalização», sublinha Tiago Forjaz. Ao posicionar-se como consultora de talento, a Jason Associates aposta numa diferenciação cultural face à oferta tradicional. «Gestão de talento não é sinónimo de recrutamento. Isso é apenas o princípio do desafio, as organizações precisam muito mais de ajuda a definir metodologias, proces-

Para além do posicionamento, a tecnologia é o segundo factor diferenciador. A Jason assume a utilização da tecnologia como factor de desenvolvimento e facilitação do potencial da comunidade de talento dentro das empresas. Uma proposta de reorganização de pessoas e aquilo que melhor sabem fazer à margem da hierarquia tradicional. «O fenómeno da sabedoria das multidões e a queda das estruturas organizativas clássicas das empresas coloca uma nova pressão so-

O mercado é, por definição, global. Colocar portugueses em qualquer parte do mundo tornou-se parte do negócio

rativas que ajudem a libertar o potencial das pessoas». A eliminação de fronteiras na colocação de talento é uma das travessias da actualização da consultoria. Tiago Forjaz realça o paradoxo inerente ao facto de hoje as empresas poderem actuar em qualquer parte do mundo, o que

pesquisas globais em tempo recorde, uma vez que não temos de fazer acordos de comissionamento com uma rede de escritórios locais». A conjuntura de crise é, na perspectiva da Jason Associates, também o momento certo para dar mais um passo em frente.

da já a 2 de Dezembro, data em que a empresa apresenta o novo site. O fantasma da recessão não preocupa, por ora, a consultora, que se considera num espaço privilegiado para crescer. «Em Portugal ainda há espaço para as empresas que assessoram empresas a escolher melhor o seu talento. O mercado terá de crescer, mas para nós o desafio ainda pode ser fazer crescer a nossa fatia do bolo do mercado existente... ainda que ele diminua».

Newspaper: Jornal de Negócios, January 2009

Quarta-feira 21 de Janeiro 2009 **Jornal de Negócios** EMPRESAS | 15

RECURSOS HUMANOS

Quando é o candidato a marcar a própria entrevista

Consultora Jason quer inverter lógica do mercado de recrutamento

Lúcia Grego | **recursos@dn.pt**

"Sou-me incómodo". "Estou em situação de conforto na minha empresa." "Vou ser uma conversa de promoção." "Devo mudar de emprego?" Se, neste momento, está a viver alguma destas circunstâncias e necessita de conselhos especializados, a Jason Associates propõe-se a dar respostas. Graças. A consultora de gestão de talentos, que quer inverter a lógica do mercado, criou uma ferramenta "online", a qual permite ao candidato marcar a sua própria entrevista com os recrutadores.

O mecanismo chama-se "Advisory Interview" - entrevista de aconselhamento - e a entrevista depende de si e, na prática, traduz-se num boteço virtual na nova página "web" da empresa (<http://www.jasonassociates.com>), lançada esta semana. Os candidatos aos conselhos são convidados a preencher alguns dados de auto-caracterização e a enviar três pessoas que desejam o seu talento. Ficam, depois, em lista de espera e são recebidos pelos consultores nos quatro dias que eles reservam mensalmente para aconselhar talentos.

Pessoas em risco iminente de perder o emprego, por exemplo, encontram nesta página de "via verde" o seu recetáculo em menos de 48 horas.

Provocação à indústria

Mas o que é isto? Conselho gratuito? O que ganha a Jason? "Posicionamento, diferenciação e provocação ao mercado", responde, ao **negócios**, Tiago Forjaz, fundador da consultora portuguesa. "Queremos inverter a lógica do mercado e dar mais poder ao candidato na gestão da sua própria carreira, estimulando-o a refletir sobre o seu talento. Não existe ninguém na indústria que o faça", considera. "O mercado está muito focado no cliente - empresa - e no recrutamento", acrescenta. "Queremos mudar este paradigma", salienta o consultor.

Tiago Forjaz, que posiciona a Jason como uma empresa de gestão de talentos, e não de "search", rejeita a ideia de que *existem* escassez de talentos. "O que há é uma ineficiência na adequação entre a oferta e a procura. A maior parte das empresas, condicionadas por uma lógica imediatista e pelo pressão para resultados, acaba por adquirir pessoas com base na sua experiência em determinada área. Ou seja, o mercado não procura talentos, e sim experiência", critica. "Se uma empresa quer um financeiro, vai buscar, de imediato, um financeiro. Com base nesta lógica, Fernando Pessoa teria sido contratado como contabilista, quando o seu maior talento era outro."

Tiago Forjaz
Fundador da Jason Associates

Se uma empresa quer um financeiro, vai buscar, de imediato, um financeiro. Com base nesta lógica, Fernando Pessoa teria sido contratado como contabilista, quando o seu maior talento era outro.

tem uma missão própria", remeta. Não será tudo demasiado utópico? "Não", sentencia Tiago Forjaz, que aponta para a sua equipa talentosa como Luís Delgado, antigo diretor internacional da Beca, que agora é "partner" da Jason Associates, e João Cotrim de Figueiredo. O ex-presidente da Copag e futuro presidente associado da Privada Holding, apelidado como "adviser", vai ajudar a consultora a iniciar o seu projeto de internacionalização. (ver texto em língua)

Além de "talent advisor", a Jason, que cresceu 8% em 2008 ao registar vendas de 1,5 milhões de euros, desenvolve soluções de consultoria ligadas à medida do cliente,

MOBILIÁRIO

Sonae Indústria despede 42 trabalhadores

despede 42 trabalhadores

A Sonae Indústria vai proceder ao despedimento coletivo de 42 dos 130 trabalhadores da fábrica de Móvelparts em Paredes e Alameda para "garantir a viabilidade" da empresa, disse à **negócios** Luís Duarte do grupo. Segundo a responsável de comunicação da Sonae Indústria, a medida faz parte de um "processo de reestruturação" em curso para "garantir a viabilidade" da Móvelparts e a "manutenção da maioria dos postos de trabalho", face ao "decréscimo crescente" do mercado do mobiliário.

O objetivo é "optimizar a capacidade das duas fábricas" da empresa em Alameda (Santarém) e em Vilela (Paredes), concentrando a primeira a produção de mobiliário e na segunda a produção de peças e molduras. Sem especificar quantos trabalhadores serão despedidos em cada uma das fábricas, a mesma fonte aduziu apenas que serão "menos mil de Paredes do que de Alameda". "Mas não vamos encerrar nenhuma das unidades", frisou.

De acordo com a responsável, a Móvelparts é uma "pequena

A medida faz parte da reestruturação em curso para garantir a viabilidade da Móvelparts e a manutenção da maioria das empresas.

empresa" da Sonae Indústria que produz peças para mobiliário em "lot" a partir de desenhos e planos de máquinas. "A Móvelparts trabalha com os nossos produtos, mas não opera no nosso core business", que são os derivados e os produtos de madeira", salientou.

Confrontado com a garantia dada pelo presidente executivo da Sonae SGPS de que o grupo não iria despedir trabalhadores, apesar da crise económica, a mesma fonte esclareceu que Paulo Azeredo "falava da Sonae SGPS, não da Sonae Indústria", que "desde o 'spin off' não está diluído da matriz da Sonae". A SGPS tem detido, da sua alçada, a Sonae Serra, Sonae Distribuição e Sonaecon.

João Cotrim de Figueiredo, futuro CEO da Privada Holding, acredita no posicionamento irreversível da portuguesa Jason. Tanto acredita que acabou recentemente a função

paises da Europa, refere João Cotrim de Figueiredo. "Além das certificações, os nossos resultados parecem com pessoas locais. Podemos optar por ter um só local a trabalhar o